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THE 1990 VIRGINIA SLIMS OPINION POLL

A 20-year perspective of Women's Issues

THE 1990 VIRGINIA SLIMS OPINION POLL

A Study Conducted by The Roper Organization Inc.

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Introduction and Overview

The past 20 years have brought unprecedented change in the lives of American women. The tumultuous social and economic developments experienced between 1970 and 1990 have fundamentally altered the way women view themselves and their role in society.

The Virginia Slims Opinion Poll has chronicled the impact of these historic changes six times in the past two decades. The surveys span a period in which evolution and upheaval produced a women's rights movement that made new demands, earned victories, and brought about headline-making events – from the first woman astronaut to the first woman justice on the Supreme Court.

But perhaps even more significant than these celebrated accomplishments was the surge of women into the workplace. And the changes at work were mirrored by changes at home as ideas about sex roles and marriages were radically transformed. The Virginia Slims Polls – conducted in 1970, 1972, 1974, 1980, 1985, and 1990 – provide the most comprehensive picture available of Americans' values, beliefs, and behavior regarding the changes that have occurred over the past two decades.

Taken together, the Virginia Slims Polls show that if the 1970s began with an exclamation point, the 1990s begin with a question mark. New phrases embody new concerns: the "feminization of poverty", the "Mommy track"; "the glass-ceiling"; "the second shift." Against this backdrop, the 1990 Poll presents a complex view of progress and strain, of satisfaction and discontent, with goals achieved, goals reconsidered, and goals to be met as this and the next generation move toward a new century.

The 1990 Virginia Slims Opinon Poll also reports on the impact of recent developments on women's lives – especially the AIDS epidemic, the changing moral climate in the United States, and above all, rising financial pressures.

A Mainstream Movement

By many measures, the '70s and '80s were decades of advancement for women. In 1970 fewer than one woman in five had any college education, but by 1988 more than one in three did. Women made up 5% of lawyers in 1970, but more than 20% by 1989; 10% of doctors in 1970, but 18% by 1989. Yet during these same decades, other women lost ground. As the gulf between rich and poor generally widened in the United States, women constituted a growing percentage of Americans living below the poverty line.

While the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll shows that the agenda set by the women's movement is far from its goals, it also demonstrates that many of the movement's aspirations have become the nation's. In 1970, for example, only 40% of women favored efforts to improve women's status, while 42% were opposed. Today, 77% of women favor these efforts, and only 12% oppose them. Men's opinions have swung just as far: in 1970, 44% favored efforts to improve women's status and 39% opposed them; today, 74% are in favor and just 14% in opposition.

The Virginia Slims Polls record widening acceptance of the priorities of the women's movement in subtle ways. Since 1970, the Polls have asked women to identify women they most admire. In the early '70s, the favored candidates tended to be women who had achieved prominence through marriage. In contrast, three of the four top choices in the 1990 Poll (Oprah Winfrey, Margaret Thatcher, and Barbara Walters) are women known for their own achievements.

But the 1990 Poll also registers an unmistakable call for further change. Fifty percent of women believe that over the next ten years major improvements are needed in women's salaries as compared with men's. Day care, opportunities for leadership, and broader access to jobs are also high priorities. There are strong currents of discontent with life at home. On questions dealing with marriage and motherhood, substantial pluralities of women say that things have gotten worse over the past 20 years. More than 75% of women see a need for at least some degree of improvement in the decade ahead.

Personal Life: Satisfaction and Disappointment

Women derive the greatest satisfaction from their personal lives. From their relationships with family and friends to their sex lives, women rate their personal lives more favorably than their work lives. Children, friends, and husbands (or the men in their lives) emerge – in that order – as the most satisfying aspects of life.

At the same time, the 1990 Poll also indicates that women are angrier at men today than they were 20 years ago. Next to money, the amount of help their mates give around the house is the single largest cause of frustration for women who are married or living as if married. Parallel with this finding, the 1990 Poll shows that over the past 20 years, women's opinions of men have declined. In 1970, two-thirds of women believed that men are basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful. In 1990, barely half agree.

Women's growing dissatisfaction with men is undoubtedly derived from their own rising expectations – not from any wholesale change in men's character. As women contribute more to family income, they expect a more equitable division of the household responsibilities in return. Token help with the dishes or children is no longer enough.

Men's behavior – as women see it – contrasts sharply with men's beliefs about household responsibilities. Deeds don't live up to words. Fifteen years ago, both men and women expressed a preference for a traditional marriage in which the husband was the breadwinner and the wife took care of the house and children. In 1990, a majority among both sexes believe that sharing the responsibilities for earnings, housekeeping, and child-rearing makes for a more satisfying and interesting marriage. Men likewise acknowledge that the most tangible way to help women balance family and jobs would be to take more responsibility for the household work. But women indicate that men are failing to live up to this ideal and that their failure is a major source of irritation.

Marriage and family nevertheless remain at the center of most Americans' lives. More than 9 in 10 women either are married or will marry. According to a majority of women, the ideal family still has two children. And, in Americans' minds, most of the factors making for a good marriage have remained essentially unchanged over the past 15 years: being in love, sexual fidelity, and the ability to communicate feelings still top the list.

Two other factors have gained in importance. Today, 63% of women and 61% of men say that financial security is essential to a good marriage, as opposed to just 49% of both sexes in 1974. There also is growing emphasis on keeping romance alive. Seventy-eight percent of women and 76% of men cite this today, in contrast to 71% of women and 66% of men in 1974.

Rising Expectations at Work

It is in the workplace that women report both the greatest improvements over the past two decades and the greatest need for improvement in the years ahead. Women are twice as likely to acknowledge improvements in the workplace than in women's roles as mothers, spouses, and homemakers. And in 1990, for the first time, a majority of women who work full-time report that they regard work as a career rather than just a job.

Yet women also experience growing levels of dissatisfaction, resentment, and stress related to their work, their earnings, their bosses, and their prospects for advancement. And more women today than in 1970 believe that sex discrimination holds women back in the workplace.

At work, as in the home, women's expectations have risen over the past 20 years. A generation after they began crowding into the labor force, women are finding upward progress slower and harder than earlier anticipated. Women in the ranks of middle management are bumping their heads against the glass ceiling that blocks the path to the top. In 1970, 50% of women agreed that women are discriminated against in obtaining executive jobs in business. In 1990, 61% agree.

The 1990 Poll also makes it clear that money is a growing concern for women. It is the chief source of stress and resentment in women's lives, the principal factor that would make their lives better. Salary inequities between men and women are their number one complaint about the workplace. The vast majority of women who work do so because of economic necessity – 31% to support their families, 24% to support themselves, and another 32% to bring in extra money. In fact, the number of women who say they are working to support their families has risen 12 percentage points since 1980. There are growing numbers of female-headed households in the United States, along with growing numbers of married couples who find they need two incomes to support their families. In 1990, only 8% of women say they work for something interesting to do.

Having It All?

Lily Tomlin's quip, "If I'd known this is what it would be like to have it all, I might have been willing to settle for less," would strike a responsive chord with many women in 1990. It is true that since the mid-1970s, a majority of women have said that the ideal life combines marriage, career, and children. But preference for this kind of life, which increased from 1974 to 1985, has since suffered a noticeable, if modest, decline. The proportion of women saying that they personally would prefer to combine marriage, career, and children declined six points to 57% since 1985. And the proportion of women who would choose a dual-earner, shared-responsibility marriage dropped from 57% in 1985 to 53% in 1990.

In part, this shift reflects the difficulties women have experienced in trying to balance work, marriage, and children. Stress is a greater fact of life for women today than at any other time since 1970. More women now than in 1985 believe that something is inevitably sacrificed when women work – and it is children whom they see suffering the most. In 1985, 21% of women were confident that nothing is neglected when women with families work. In 1990, just 14% would say this. Of women with children who work full-time, 61% say the conflicting demands of family and job put them under stress, and 56% say they feel guilty that they don't spend more time with their families.

The issue of maternity leave clearly causes tension. A majority of women regard a maternity leave of three months or less as most practical, in light of most job situations and employee benefits. Yet only 15% of women find staying home for three months or less with a newborn baby is ideal. Fifty percent of all women say the ideal situation would be to stay home until their child is at least two years old, yet only 11% think this is feasible. Women clearly feel compelled to accept conditions they regard as very far from ideal.

Since most women work out of financial need, they are unlikely to retreat from the workplace in large numbers. But many women are re-examining the balance of work, marriage, and children. Seven out of 10 women cite more help from men with housework and child care as the best way to make their balancing act more manageable, suggesting that women will press for changes at home as well as in the workplace. More flexible hours and better day care are at the top of their wish list.

Some women may give up or reduce their employment outside the home. Others may be drawn to alternative solutions, such as remaining single and devoting themselves to a career, living with a partner without marrying, or marrying but remaining childless. However, the majority – who, whether by choice or necessity, remain in the work force while having a family – are likely to put renewed pressures on their mates to help more at home and on their employers to ease the stress at work.

Women in a Changing World

Historical forces – including the women's movement – do not act in a vacuum. If women today are re-evaluating the movement's goals, they are doing-so in an America significantly different from that of 1970.

Changes in the U.S. economy head the list. While the '70s and '80s saw overall growth in the U.S. economy, they also saw several bouts of double-digit inflation. Home ownership, for example, became elusive for many. Debt, fed by escalated spending, reached new highs. These and other factors add up to a mounting sense of financial pressure.

The concern about money is one of the most dramatic findings of the 1990 Virginia Slims Poll. Fully 70% of women say money is a source of stress. When asked what would make life better, 60% of women respond more money, by far the number one answer. Even among those with incomes of $50,000 and more, the desire for more money outstrips more leisure time by a wide margin.

Since 1970, the moral climate in the United States also has changed, opening new options for women. In 1970, for example, only 11% of women thought it should be legal for adults to have children without getting married; 42% think so today. Not surprisingly, single parenthood now has considerable appeal for women. Fully one-third say that if they were single and nearing the end of their childbearing years, they would consider having a child on their own without marrying.

The AIDS epidemic is another development of the last decade that has had a measurable impact on American women. Two-thirds of single women (and 57% of single men) say that the threat of AIDS and of other sexually transmitted diseases has made them less sexually active.

Rising rates of crime in the last two decades also have affected women. Seventy-two percent of women say they feel more afraid and uneasy on the streets today than they did a few years ago. The increasing level of fear may be partly responsible for the fact that a two-thirds majority of women currently favors capital punishment – in contrast to just 46% in 1970.

What Lies Ahead?

Women are virtually unanimous that their roles should – and will – continue to change in the 1990s. A majority of women (and of men) believes that women can look forward to a better life 20 years from today. Fifty-eight percent of women believe that change will come as a matter of course without any organized effort by women. The 37% of women who see a need for a strong and organized women's movement tend to be those with higher levels of income, education, and employment status.

The 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll indicates the areas where change is most likely to occur:

Money issues. Whether or not a recession takes place in the 1990s, money is already a major source of anxiety for most women and their families. As a result, financial issues – pay parity above all – should increasingly dominate women's efforts for change in the next decade.

Breaking through the "glass-ceiling." Women express growing confidence in their abilities as workers and leaders. Their gains in education and in a widening sphere of occupations are likely, over time, to mean greater success in reaching top positions in government and business. The sheer force of numbers will mean that more women will become senior managers. This trend is likely to accelerate, since young women of the 21st century will be able to look to a wider range of female role models occupying places of leadership.

Accommodations at home and at work. As growing numbers of women discover that trying to balance marriage, work, and family can be highly stressful, they will press for change both at home and at work. There will be renewed conflict over the proper division of labor within the household. Men pay lip service to the need for them to take on more responsibilities in the home. Men are likely to feel compelled to become more involved with home responsibilities as women's income levels approach theirs.

At work, day-care subsidies, parental leave, and flexible work schedules will be in line behind salary issues as focal points for change. Demographic trends suggest that the U.S. labor market will tighten in the next decade. Even in industries that have been male strongholds, employers will need to turn, increasingly, to women. Employers will have an added incentive to create attractive working conditions for women, and many will do so by meeting women's workplace demands.

Narrowing of the expectation gap. As the institutions of society adapt to accommodate their needs, women will reduce the pressure on themselves to be superwomen. Some will choose not to marry, not to have children. Others will opt to put their careers on hold in order to stay at home with small children, or to devote themselves full-time to home and family. Most, however, will continue to pursue a triple role as worker, mother, and wife.

These highlights and other findings from the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll are discussed in greater detail in the following six chapters. Included with the information are detailed graphs and charts – showing changes over time when possible – to further illustrate the opinions.

1 1970-1990: How Far Have We Come? How Far Do We Have To Go?

1970-1990: HOW FAR HAVE WE COME? HOW FAR DO WE HAVE TO GO ?

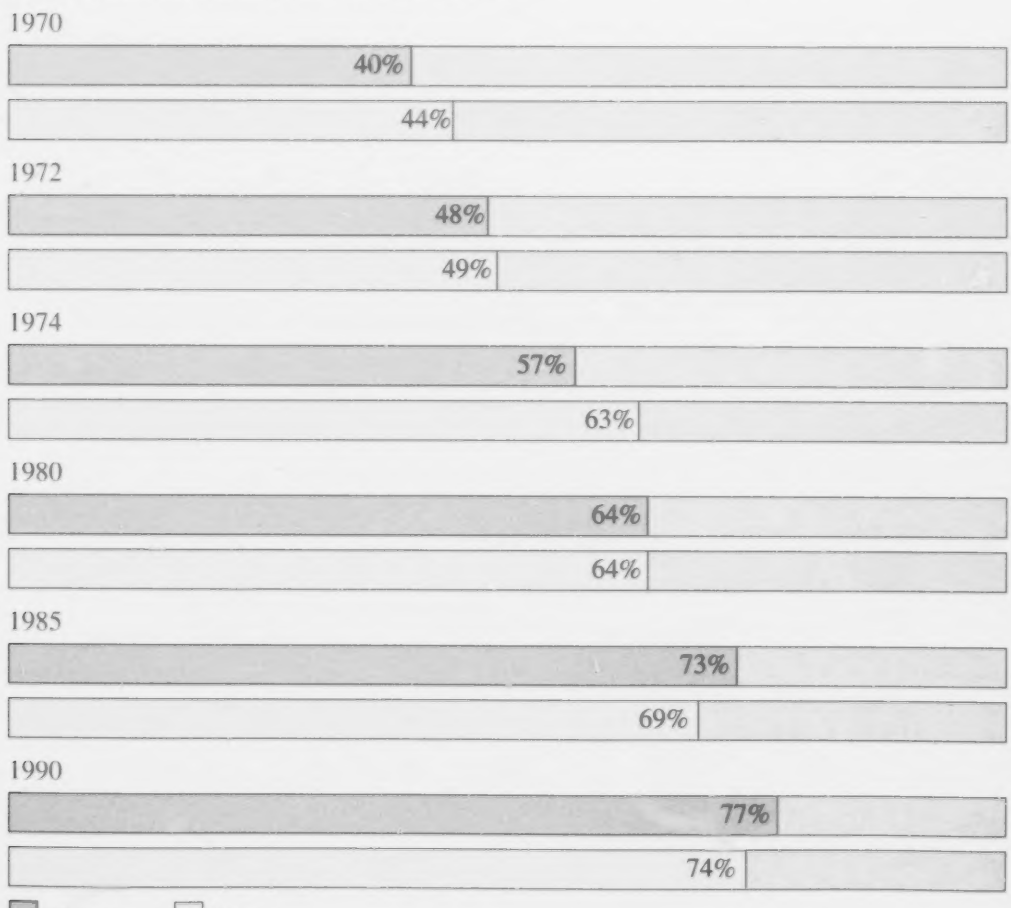
Since the first Virginia Slims Opinion Poll was conducted in 1970, women's lives—their roles in the workplace, in the home, and in all other aspects of American society—have changed profoundly. The radical and controversial ideas and attitudes of 1970 are well within the mainstream in 1990. In this chapter, we examine what has changed in these past two decades.

Strengthening Women's Status

Support for efforts to improve the status of women in society not only remains strong but continues to rise. Twenty years ago, only 40% of women said they favored efforts to strengthen the status of women, while 42% were opposed. Today, 77% are in favor of efforts to improve women's status while only 12% are opposed.

Men share this view. Seventy-four percent say they favor efforts to improve women's status, up from 44% in 1970. Men who oppose such efforts have dropped from 39% in 1970 to 14% today.

Favor Efforts to Strengthen Women's Status



Twenty years ago, only three groups of women—single, divorced or separated, and black women—sought an improvement in the status of women. Today, majorities of *all* groups of women support such efforts. Support is now strongest among single or divorced women, those aged 18 to 29, and college-educated and employed women.

Favor Efforts to Strengthen Women's Status: Breakdown by Demographic Segments
(In percent)

	1970	1990
Total women	40	77
Single	53	85
Married	38	75
Divorced/separated	61	82
Widowed	36	66
18 to 29	46	83
30 to 39	40	79
40 to 49	39	80
50 and over	35	69
Non-high school graduate	36	67
High school graduate	38	75
College	44	82
Employed women	44	81
Northeast	41	81
Midwest	38	77
South	39	73
West	42	76
White	37	76
Black	60	79

About three-quarters of women and men expect women's roles in society to continue changing. Very few foresee any backward movement. Both women and men have felt this way for the past ten years.

Further evolution in women's roles is more welcome today than it was in either 1980 or 1985. Both women and men feel comfortable with the prospects for change in female roles and status. In fact, nearly three-quarters of both sexes think that women's roles *should* continue to change in the future. In 1980, by comparison, only 57% of women and 58% of men said they thought women's roles should continue to change.

Will Women's Roles Continue to Change? Should They?
(In percent)

	1980	1985	1990
Women			
Will continue to change	72	76	73
Should continue to change	57	69	74
Men			
Will continue to change	74	75	76
Should continue to change	58	67	73

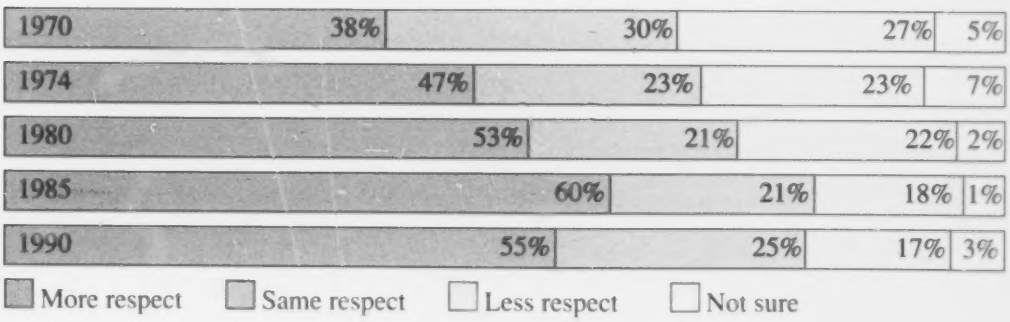
Gaining Respect

Most women (55%) feel that women command more respect than they did ten years ago. While this is dramatically higher than the 38% of women who felt this way in 1970, it represents a slight drop from the 60% level recorded in 1985.

A sense of erosion of respect since 1985 is sharpest among women in their thirties (down 10 percentage points to 56%), those with at least some college education (a 9 point drop to 61%), and women with middle incomes (a decline of 11 points to 57% among those with household incomes between $25,000 and $35,000).

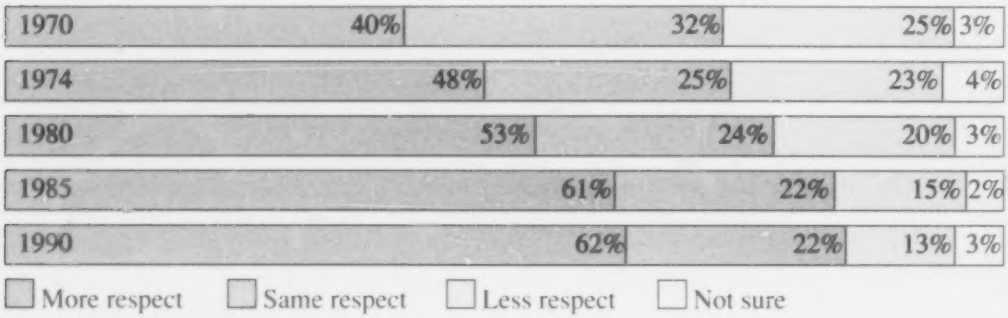
While we cannot pinpoint the reason for this slight reversal, several factors have to be considered. Perhaps, as the nation emerged from the upheaval of the 1970s, women sensed a palpable change in attitudes toward them. In the decade 1980-90, the rate of change in the status of women stabilized, thus altering the perception of change in respect for women relative to "ten years ago."

Respect for Women: Women's Perspective



Men's attitudes remain about the same as in 1985, with 62% saying that women are now looked on with more respect . Twenty-two percent say that respect levels for women are about the same as ten years ago.

Respect for Women: Men's Perspective



Is It Still A Man's World?

Previous Virginia Slims Opinion Polls have asked whether women or men enjoy more advantages in American society. In 1974, the majority of women saw no more advantages in being one sex than the other; only 31% said it was more advantageous to be a man. The perception that it's a man's world increased in 1980 and again in 1985. Five years ago, nearly half of all women (49%) said being a man offered more advantages. Meanwhile, the proportion saying neither sex had the advantage declined from 56% to 31%.

The opinion among women that it is more advantageous to be a man in our society reached a peak in 1985; since then, women appear to have modified that view somewhat. In 1990, they are evenly split on this question: 43% say there are more advantages in being a man, 44% say there are no more advantages in being one or the other. However, one opinion has remained constant over the 15-year period: no more than 10% of women have ever said they believe being a woman offers more advantages.

The women who are most likely to feel it is more advantageous to be a man are those who compete most directly with men in management and professional positions, those 30-49 years of age, college graduates, those who are more affluent, and those with children.

Not surprisingly, most women who feel that there are more advantages in being a man relate their opinions to the workplace. Fifty-six percent cite some kind of job-related answer. These women say that men get better jobs and better pay and have more choices and opportunities. And more than a quarter (27%) of women indicate that they just feel "it's a man's world."

Is It More Advantageous to be a Man or a Woman?
(In percent)

	1974	1980	1985	1990
Women's perspective				
More advantages in being a man	31	43	49	43
More advantages in being a woman	8	9	8	9
No more advantages in being one than the other	56	45	41	44
Men's perspective				
More advantages in being a man	42	43	51	41
More advantages in being a woman	5	10	8	12
No more advantages in being one than the other	48	44	39	45

Women's Lives: What's Better, What's Not?

What's improved in women's lives since the 1970s, and what's deteriorated?

Almost unanimously, women say life has improved in the workplace. Eighty-nine percent of women say better jobs are available, and 86% say women's salaries compared with those paid to men are also better.

Nearly 8 in 10 cite improved opportunities for leadership positions in business, while 7 in 10 point to better day-care options available to working mothers. The same proportion also cite improved opportunities for leadership positions in government. In each of these areas, however, most women feel conditions have improved a little, not a lot.

Men generally agree with women in this assessment, with one difference: Men feel more strongly than women that women have greater job opportunities and greater salary parity. Although this represents a difference in degree rather than in kind, it may help account for men's relatively more optimistic view of women's improved status in all facets of American society.

On the negative side, many women say the quality of marriages women have has diminished since 1970 (45% say things have gotten worse, 34% say they have improved), and, by a narrower margin (41%-36%), they also say that women's roles as mothers are worse now. There is an even 37%-37% split on the question of whether women's roles as homemakers have improved or gotten worse in the past 20 years.

So while women report an improvement in women's employment situations over the past 20 years, many apparently feel these gains have come at the expense of home and family life. Combining work and family has increased the pressures on women as wives, mothers, and homemakers. And exacerbating the problem, as we will see in later chapters, is women's perception that men are not yet contributing their fair share to the household work.

Do Women Think Things Have Improved or Gotten Worse?
(In percent)

	Improved	Hasn't changed	Gotten worse
The kinds of jobs open to women	89	5	4
The salaries women are paid compared with what men are paid	86	8	4
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in business	79	12	6
The day-care options available to working mothers	72	10	14
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in government	71	18	7
Women's roles as homemakers	37	23	37
Women's roles as mothers	36	20	41
The kinds of marriages women have	34	16	45

While most women concur about the improvements in women's lives, the Poll found important differences of opinion concerning the aspects of life which women feel have gotten worse. For example, older women think the marriages women have are worse now; younger women disagree:

- Among women 50 years of age and older, 55% say things have gotten worse while fewer than half as many (24%) say they have gotten better.
- Among 40-49 year olds the gap narrows, to 44%-32%.
- Among 30-39 year olds, more women feel that marriages have improved (42%) than feel they have gotten worse (38%).
- Among the youngest women, those aged 18-29, 40% say marriages have improved and 37% say they have worsened.

Working women tend to disagree with non-working women about the state of marriage today. Working women split almost evenly on this question, with 39% saying marriages are better today and 40% saying they are worse. Among women who are both married *and* working, slightly more say marriages are better (41%) than worse (38%). By an emphatic 51%-27% margin, however, non-working women find marriage worse.

As to women's roles as mothers, women aged 50 and older say that things have gotten worse, while younger women believe that they have gotten better. By a 42% to 37% margin, women with children under 18 think mothers' roles have improved. And among working women with children, this margin widens still further (45% to 36%). This endorsement of mothers' roles today is particularly significant coming from the group of women most subject to the dual pressures of work and family.

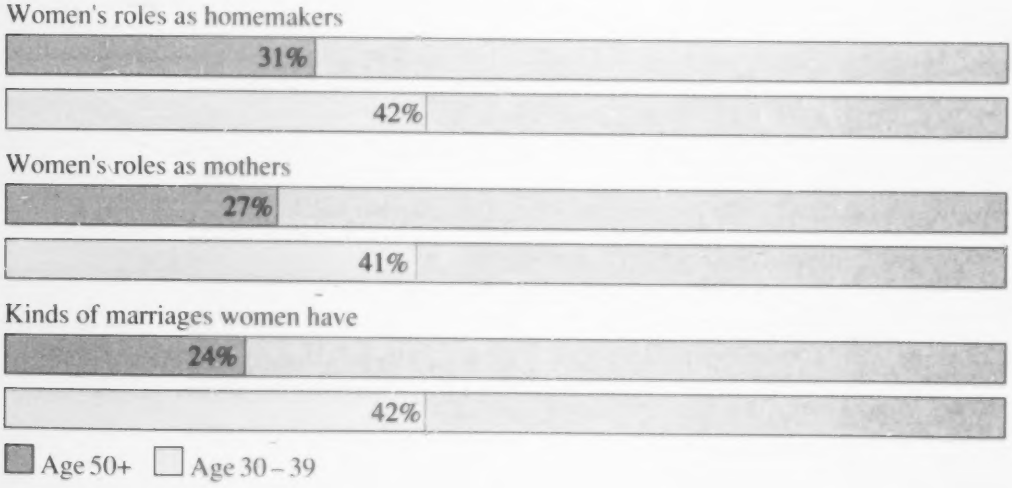
Age is again a factor when it comes to women's roles as homemakers. Older women say things have gotten worse, and younger women say they have improved. There is little difference of opinion among other subgroups of women on this question.

Older women and those without children at home– those most likely to have been "traditional" wives and mothers – are most likely to think that women's roles as mothers and homemakers are worse today, whereas women with children – particularly *working* women with children – think that women's domestic roles are better now than 20 years ago.

Why these differences? Basically, they reflect a generation gap between two groups of women who might be called "Traditionalists" and "Mainstream Moderns"– women who have made different choices in their own lives. The Traditionalists, mostly older women, were raised to be traditional homemakers but now see diminishing social support for that role. With little or no earning power of their own, they stand to lose the most in a society that devalues the homemaker role and accepts working women and dual-income families as the norm.

Mainstream Moderns, on the other hand, are better prepared to be wage earners as well as wives and mothers. They are usually Baby Boomers, and have benefitted directly from social changes that opened career paths to them, and they endorse the idea of men helping more at home. As this more egalitarian form of marriage becomes more common, these women welcome the change as an improvement in their own lives.

Traditionalists Versus Mainstream Moderns
(Percent of women who say each item has improved a lot or a little)



What Needs to Change?

Women indicate that things have generally improved since 1970 with respect to women's roles in the workplace, but many feel that their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers have gotten worse. Nevertheless, the workplace dominates the list of areas where women feel major changes are needed over the next ten years in order to make women's lives better.

For example, half of women say that major changes are needed over the next ten years with respect to the salaries women are paid compared with what men are paid, and another 43% say that some changes are needed in this area. Large percentages call for major changes in the day-care options available to working mothers, women's opportunities for leadership positions in government and in business, and the kinds of jobs open to women.

Not surprisingly, working women—particularly those with young children—are the most likely to say that major changes are needed in day care. This is particularly so among mothers who work part-time, suggesting that they might work full-time if better day care were available. College-educated women and those already in executive and professional positions are most likely to say that major changes are needed in terms of women's opportunities for leadership positions in business and government.

Fewer women see a need for major changes in women's marriages, their roles as mothers, or their roles as homemakers, although most women agree that some changes are called for. In short, while women report that things have gotten worse at home since 1970, the workplace remains their top priority area for change in the decade ahead.

Men are less likely in every instance to see a need for major changes, although most men agree that at least some changes are required in each of the eight areas.

What Women Think Needs to Change
(In percent)

	Major changes are needed	Some changes are needed	No Real changes are needed
The salaries women are paid compared with what men are paid	50	43	5
The day-care options available to working mothers	47	42	7
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in government	45	45	7
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in business	44	46	7
The kinds of jobs open to women	42	48	8
The kinds of marriages women have	35	43	17
Women's roles as mothers	30	46	20
Women's roles as homemakers	29	46	21

Women apparently feel that they had so far to go in 1970 that, despite major strides since then, they are still far short of equality in the workplace.

At the same time, while women's home lives – their roles as mothers, spouses, and homemakers – may have suffered somewhat over the past 20 years, they apparently have not deteriorated to the point where women believe major steps are required to make things better. Further, women view their domestic lives as *comparatively* more rewarding than their work lives.

The Role of the Women's Movement in the 1990s

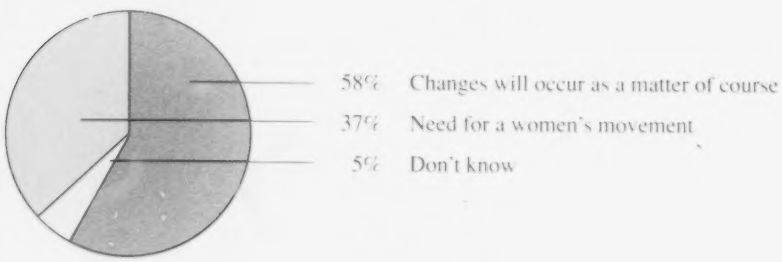
Against the backdrop of nearly unanimous opinion that women's roles should – and will – continue to change in the 1990s, what role do women see for an organized women's movement?

By nearly a 3 to 2 margin, women say that changes will occur as a matter of course without any organized effort on the part of women (58%). Just 37% see a need for a strong and organized women's movement to effect further changes. Men feel even more strongly that change will come as a matter of course.

While half or more of all subgroups of women agree that changes will occur as a matter of course, there are some sharp differences in degree. The perception among women of a need for a strong and organized women's movement increases with rising levels of income, education, and employment status.

Note: This question measures the extent to which women feel that change will come naturally, or whether external pressure is needed; this should not be misinterpreted as an evaluation of the efforts of today's women's movement.

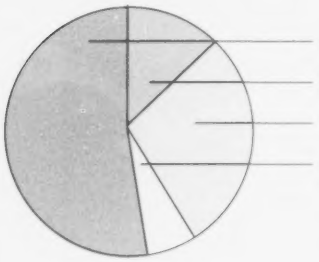
Will Changes for Women Occur as a Matter of Course or Is There a Need for an Organized Movement?
(Women's opinions)



Of those women who see a need for a strong and organized women's movement, 53% believe that the movement should be a continuation of the kind that existed in the 1970s and 1980s. Another 29% agree that it should be basically the same kind of movement, but with some changes in emphasis. Thirteen percent say a substantially different kind of women's movement is required.

Women most likely to favor changes in the women's movement are the most educated, the most affluent, those with the highest status jobs (executives and professionals), those working part-time, those who live in the West, and those who live in small cities and rural areas. In each of these groups, a majority of women say that changes in the women's movement—mostly some changes in emphasis, not a substantially new direction—are needed.

What Kind of Women's Movement Is Needed?
(Among women who think women's movement is needed for social change to occur)



53% Continuation of the kind we had in the '70s and '80s
13% A substantially different kind of women's movement
29% Basically the same but with some changes in emphasis
6% Don't know

The Next Generation

As an indicator of their optimism or pessimism about the future, respondents were asked to compare the lives of young women 20 years from now with the lives of young women today.

A 52% majority of women, and even more men (57%), think that the next generation of young women will have a better life. Three in 10 among both sexes say young women's lives in 20 years will be about the same, and only 1 in 10 think their lives will be worse. However, this reflects a general optimism about the nation's future and is not necessarily related to the improving status of women.

Groups most likely to think that the next generation of young women will live a better life are the better educated, the more affluent, and the younger segments of the population.

What Kind of Life Women 20 Years From Now Can Look Forward To
(In percent)

	Women	Men
Better life	52	57
Not as good a life	12	9
Not much different	30	29
Don't know	6	4

2 A Personal Perspective

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

In the previous chapter, we looked at attitudes and opinions about women and their changing status in American society. We now take a more personal perspective, focusing on how women evaluate their *own* lives as the decade of the 1990s begins:

- Which aspects of women's lives are particularly satisfying and which are not?
- What factors in their lives, if any, do they resent?
- What causes them stress, and how do they cope with it?
- What kinds of changes would do the most to make their lives better?

Personal Satisfaction With Life

Asked to rate how satisfied they are with each of 15 aspects of their own lives, the overwhelming majority of women report at least some satisfaction with all 15. The 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll finds clear differences, however, between the aspects of life women find very satisfactory and those they find less satisfactory. Leading the "very satisfied" list are personal relationships—their children, the men in their lives, their friends. The bottom end of the satisfaction scale relates to jobs and finances.

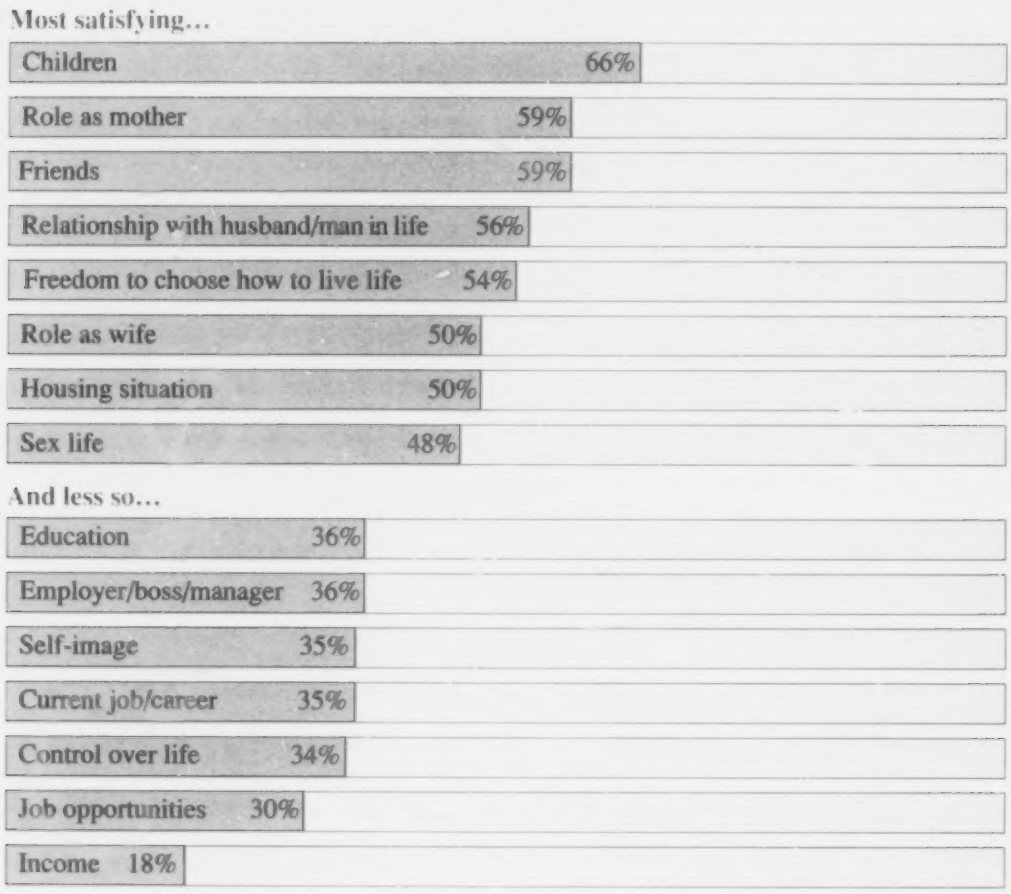
Women continue to find their greatest satisfactions in their most intimate relationships, with friends, lovers, husbands, and children. The top four aspects of life that women say they are very satisfied with all concern personal relationships.

Sex falls right in the middle of the list, with just under half of all women saying they are very satisfied with their sex lives. However, this divides sharply: 53% of married women report that their sex life is very satisfying, compared with 30% of singles (who say this question applies to them) and 27% of women who are separated, divorced, or widowed (again of those to whom the question applies). These findings suggest that the single life is far from swinging for the majority of unmarried women today.

Dead last on women's list of satisfying aspects of their lives, far below all other items, is income; only 18% consider theirs very satisfactory. Even among the most affluent, women with a household income of $50,000 or more, only 32% say they are very satisfied with their level of income.

Life's Satisfactions

(Percent of women very satisfied, of those to whom item applies)



The 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll finds major differences among women in satisfaction with the education- and work-related aspects of their lives—differences closely related to their own status in the work force. While just 36% of all women say they are very satisfied with their education, college graduates are more than three times as likely to be very satisfied (67%) than those who never graduated from high school (21%). Interestingly, college graduates are almost twice as satisfied with their education as the next best-educated group—women who attended college but did not graduate. Only 35% of the latter group say they are very satisfied. Clearly, many women regret dropping out of college without a degree.

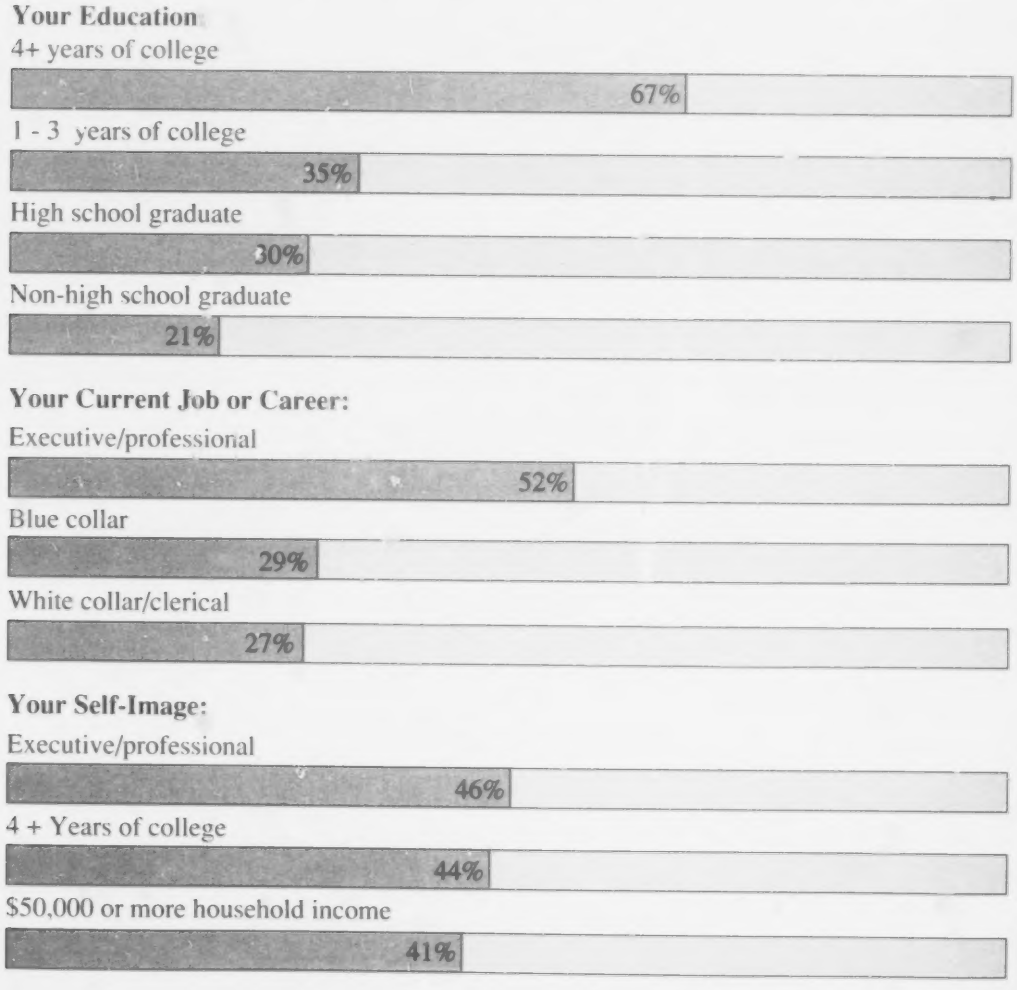
Similarly, while 35% of *all* working women rate their current job or career as very satisfying, executives and professionals are far more satisfied (52%) than white collar (27%) or blue collar (29%) workers.

The level of women's satisfaction with future job prospects reflects their current occupational position. There is a sharp division between women in executive or professional positions (45% of whom report being very satisfied) and those in either white collar or blue collar jobs (only a quarter of whom see very satisfactory advancement opportunities). Women executives and professionals are more satisfied with their employer, boss, or manager as well. Thirty-nine percent of women in executive or professional positions, 36% of white collar workers, and only 27% of blue collar workers say they are very satisfied with their boss or manager.

Even women's self-image appears to be directly related to their education and occupational status. Thirty-five percent of all women report being very satisfied with their image of themselves. The women who are the most satisfied with their self-image are those in executive or professional positions (46%), college graduates (44%), and those with $50,000 or more in annual household income (41%). For American women in 1990, "making it" by getting a good education, having a good job, and earning a good income appears to be a prescription for a positive self-image.

Life's Satisfactions, by Demographic Subgroup

(Percent of women who say they are very satisfied)



Men's feelings about life's satisfactions generally mirror women's. In the area of personal relationships, children are overwhelmingly the greatest satisfaction in men's lives, with two-thirds of men who are fathers saying they are very satisfied with their children. At the same time, men rate their parental role as less satisfying (with 50% of fathers, compared with 59% of mothers, saying they are very satisfied). One possible explanation: Fathers may spend less time than they would like with their children. Divorce is also undoubtedly a factor in this disparity, since fathers see their children far less frequently after a marriage dissolves.

Another significant difference: Compared with women, fewer men rate their friendships as very satisfying (53% versus 59% of women), but more say their relationship with their wife or the woman in their life is very satisfying (by 60% to 56%). While women appear to have more intimate friends of the same sex, men tend to use marriage to satisfy their need for emotional closeness.

In the work world, men are not significantly more satisfied than women with their education, employer or boss, or income. However, more men than women say they are very satisfied with their future job prospects (by a 36% to 30% margin) and their self-image (by a 41% to 35% margin).

Causes of Resentment

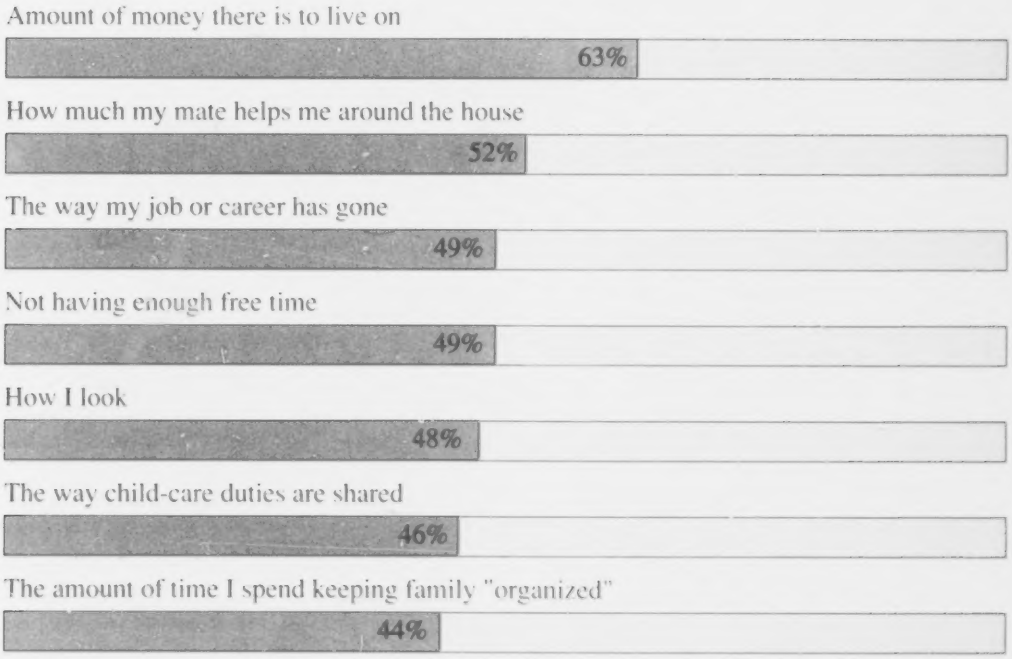
Consistent with their dissatisfaction with their incomes, women's greatest source of resentment is their money—or lack of it. About one in two women say that, at least sometimes, they feel resentful about several other aspects of their lives: how much their mate helps around the house (52% of those who have a mate), the way their job or career has gone (49% of working women), not having enough free time (49%), and how they look (48%). Slightly fewer also resent how child-care related duties are handled in their household (46% of those with children at home) and the amount of time they spend keeping the family "organized" (44% of those with a family).

Fewer women say they resent the amount of time they spend thinking about family responsibilities (35% of those with families), getting married too young (27%), having children too young (25%), not finding the right person to be happy with (23%), or the responsibility of caring for elderly family members (22%).

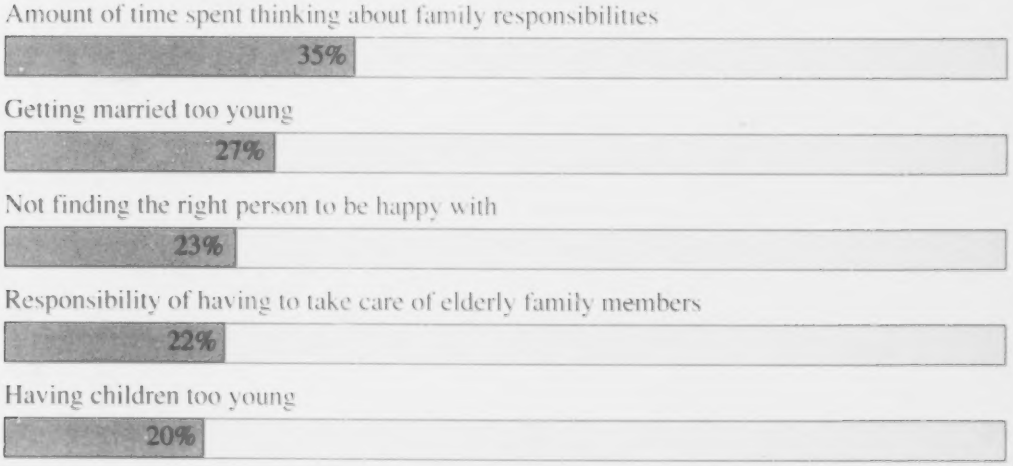
Causes of Resentment

(Percent of women who feel resentful often or from time to time, of those to whom item applies)

What causes the most resentment...



And what causes less...

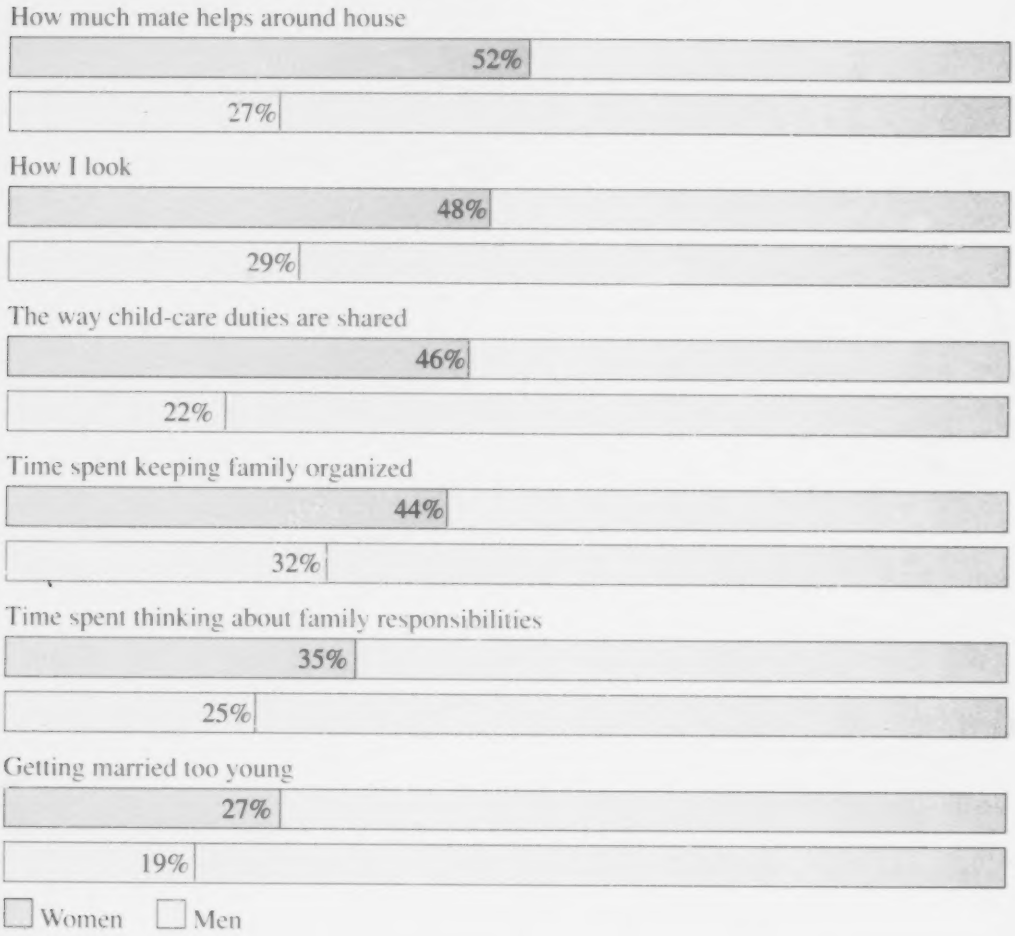

Amount of time spent thinking about family responsibilities
35%
Getting married too young
27%
Not finding the right person to be happy with
23%
Responsibility of having to take care of elderly family members
22%
Having children too young
20%

Do women feel more resentment than men? The answer is a resounding yes, at least in several key aspects of life. The widest gaps are in the areas of:

- How much their mate helps out around the house (52% of women say they feel resentful at least from time to time, versus only 27% of men);
- How they look (48% versus 29%); and
- The way child-care related duties are shared in their households (46% versus 22%).

The Resentment Gap: Women Versus Men

(Percent who feel resentful often or sometimes, of those to whom item applies)



What Would Make Life Better?

Sixty percent of women (and 64% of men) say that having more money would make their lives better. Next on a list of 12 items – far behind money– is "having more control over the way things are going in my life" (cited by 28% of women and 30% of men). These two items top the list for every demographic subgroup, including women and men of all income levels.

A close third among married women, however, is more help with household responsibilities from their husbands; 26% say that this would improve their lives significantly.

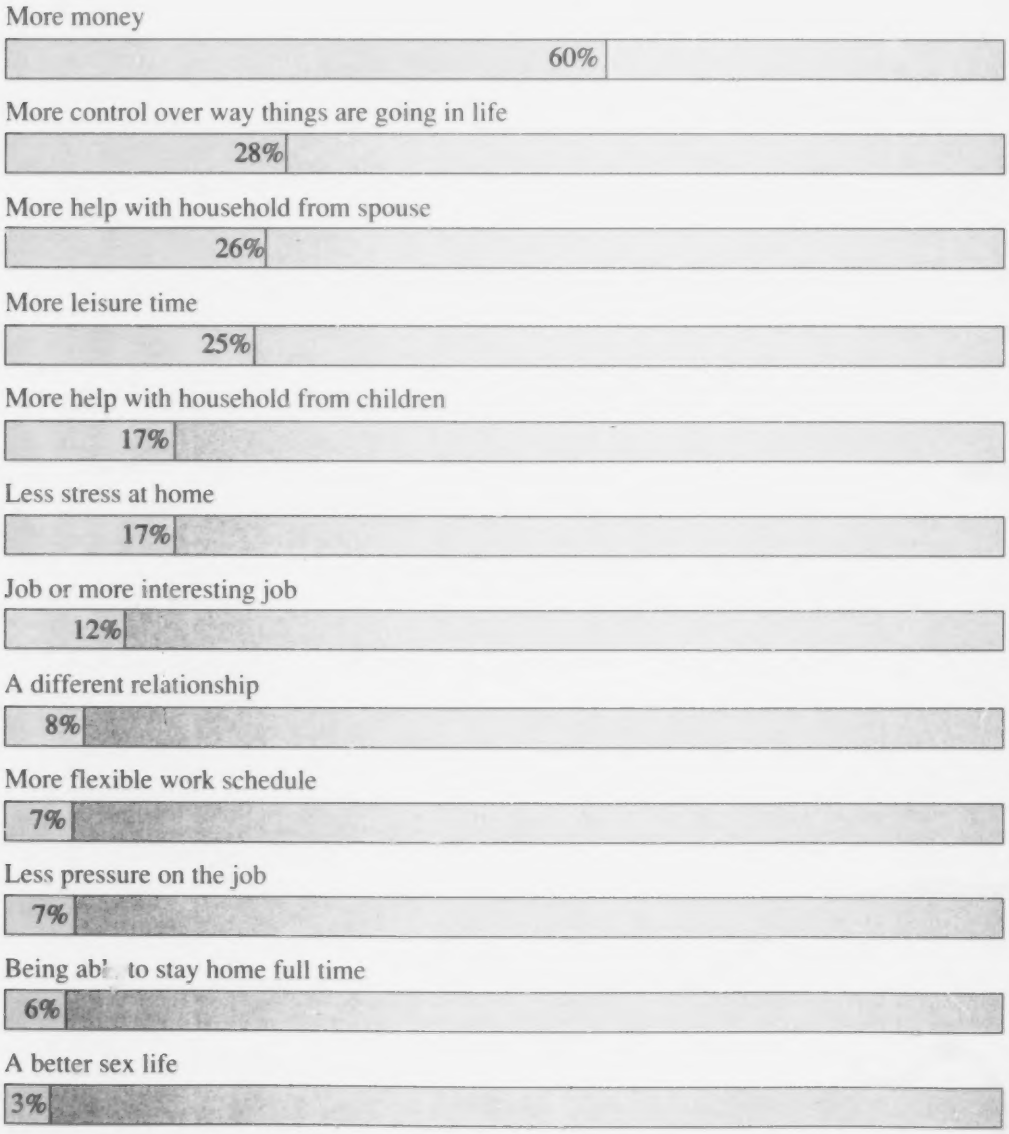
Another high priority item for all groups of women and men is more leisure time. It is cited by 25% of women and 31% of men.

Other wishes? Seventeen percent of women would like to have less stress at home. An equal number of those with children at home say that more help from their children with household responsibilities would make life better—fully 27% of women with teenagers

feel this way. Lower priorities for women include a job or a more interesting job (12%), a different relationship (8% overall, but 20% of single women), a more flexible work schedule (7% overall, 12% of full-time working women), and less pressure on the job (7% overall, 14% of full-time working women).

Despite assertions that women are becoming "New Traditionalists," only 6% of women say that being able to stay home full-time and take care of home and family would make their lives better. Even among the most pressured group of all – full-time working women with children under 13 – only 15% say that staying home would improve their lives. At the bottom of women's list of things that would improve their lives: a better sex life, cited by only 3% of women (but 8% of men).

What Would Make Life Better? Mainly Money
(Of women to whom item applies)



As income increases, the percentage of women who say money would make life better decreases (from a high of 72% of women earning under $15,000 per year to a low of 48% of women earning $50,000 a year or more) while the percentage who wish for more leisure time increases—from 15% of those in the lowest income group to 37% of those in the most affluent group. More leisure time is also a priority for full-time working women (36%), particularly those with children under 18 (41%).

Stress, and How Women Cope With It

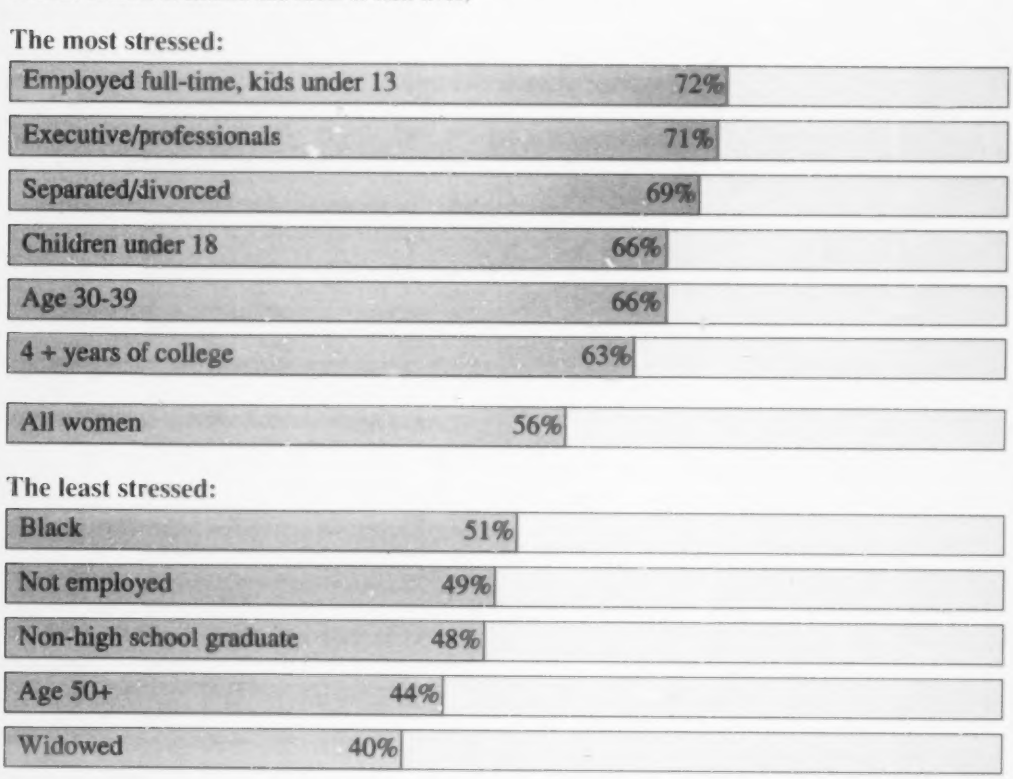
Stress seems to be a way of life for most women today. Fifty-six percent say they have a good deal or fair amount of tension or stress in their lives, while 42% say they have very little or non. Men report somewhat less stress: 51% say they live under a good deal or fair amount of stress.

Subgroups of women reporting the highest levels of stress:

- Women in executive or professional positions (71% say they have a good deal or fair amount of stress in their lives, versus 60% of men in comparable positions);
- Those who are separated or divorced (69%);
- Women with children under 18 at home (66%);
- Women in their thirties (66%); and
- Women who work full-time (64%, versus 59% of women who work part-time and 49% of women who are not employed outside the home). Within this group, fully 70% of women who work full-time *and* have children under 18 say they experience a good deal or fair amount of stress.

Stress: A Way of Life for Women

(Percentage of women more/less likely than average to say there is a good deal or a fair amount of tension and stress in their lives)



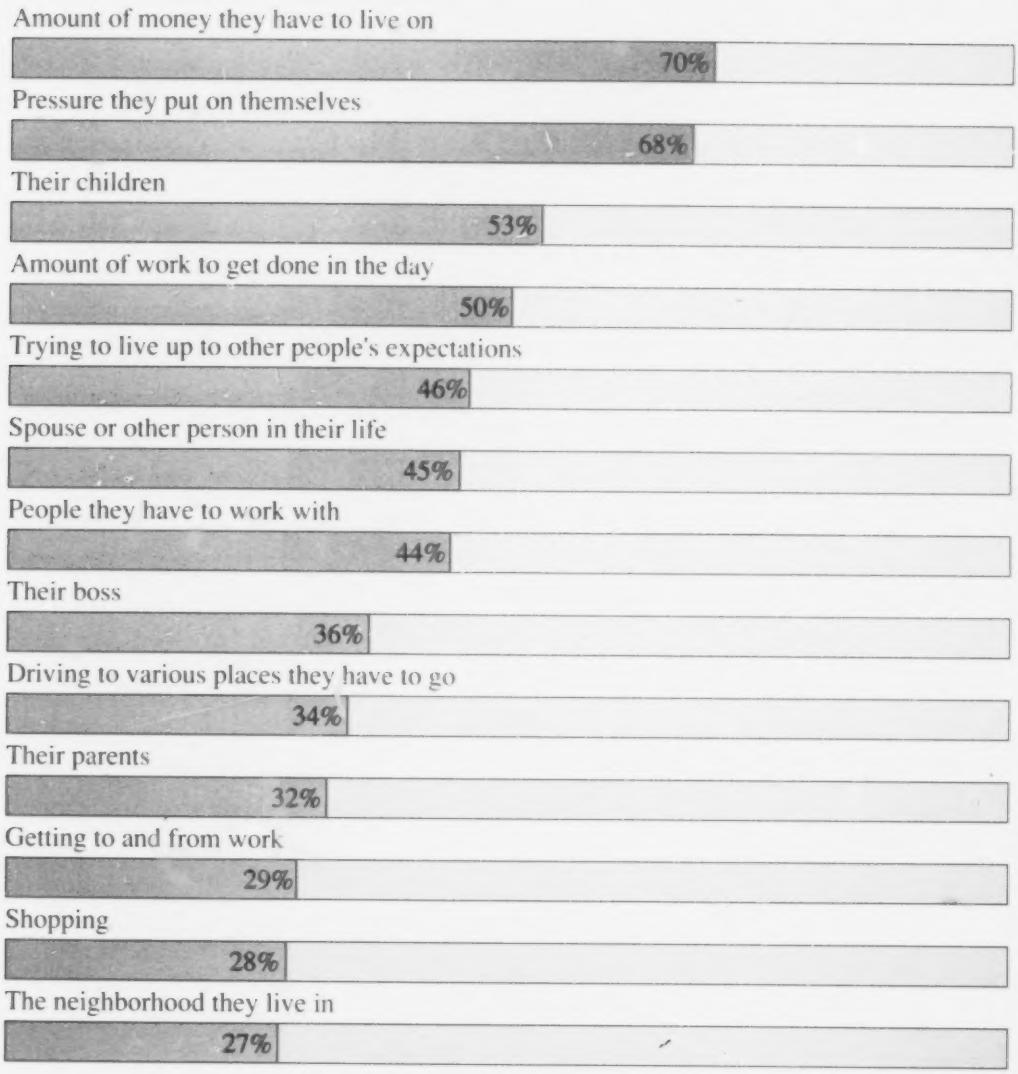
What causes the stress in women's lives? The two major culprits are shortages of money (which 70% say is either a major or minor cause of stress in their lives) and self-imposed pressure (68%).

A majority of women also cite their children (a cause of stress for 53% of all women with children and for 64% of women with children under 18). Interestingly, mothers who do not work outside the home report stress from their children to the same extent as women who do. However, 50% of all women, 66% of women with children under 18, and 73% of employed women with children under 18 cite the amount of work they have to get done in the day as a source of stress.

Between a third and a half of women cite other stress factors, such as trying to live up to other people's expectations (46%—highest among 18-29 year olds, singles, and those with children under 18), the man in their life (45%), the people they work with (44%), and their boss (36%).

Smaller numbers consider the following to be stressful: their parents (32%), driving to the various places they need to drive (34%), getting to and from work (29%), shopping (28%), and their neighborhoods (27%).

Causes of Stress in Women's Lives
(Percent saying item is a major or minor cause of stress, of those to whom item applies)



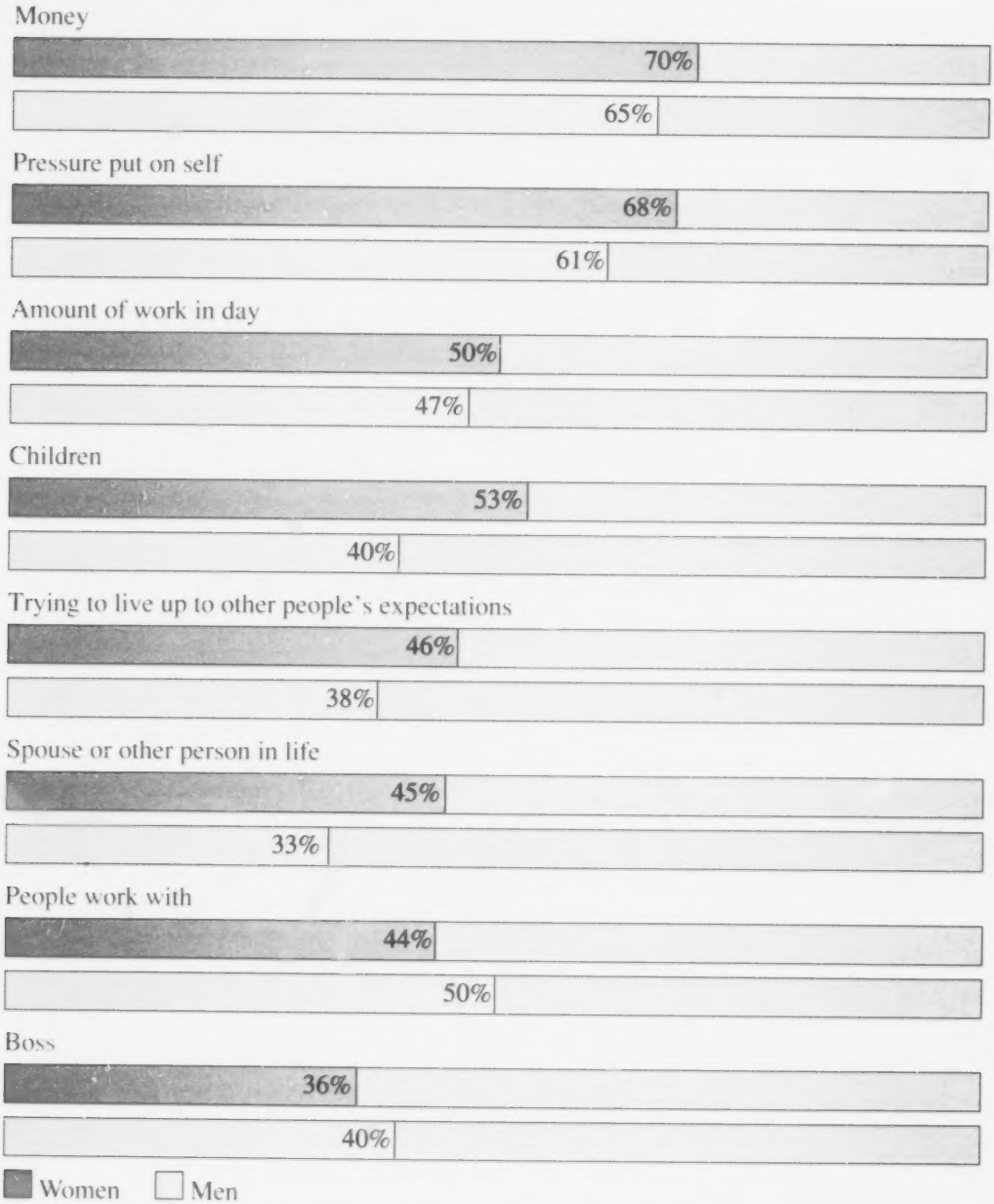
There are some significant– and revealing– differences between men and women as to what causes stress. Women find every one of these areas more stressful than men do. The biggest differences occur with respect to the following:

- Self-imposed pressure (a source of stress for 68% of women compared with 61% of men)
- Children (53% of all mothers versus 40% of fathers; among those with children under 18, 64% of mothers versus 49% of fathers);
- A spouse or mate (45% versus 33%);
- Living up to other people's expectations (46% versus 38%); and
- Shopping (28% versus 21%).

There are only two areas that men are more likely than women to perceive as stress inducing. Fully half of working men (versus 44% of working women) find their co-workers a source of stress, and 40% (compared with 36% of women) cite their bosses.

Top Causes of Stress: Women and Men

(Percent saying item is a major or minor cause of stress, of those to whom item applies)

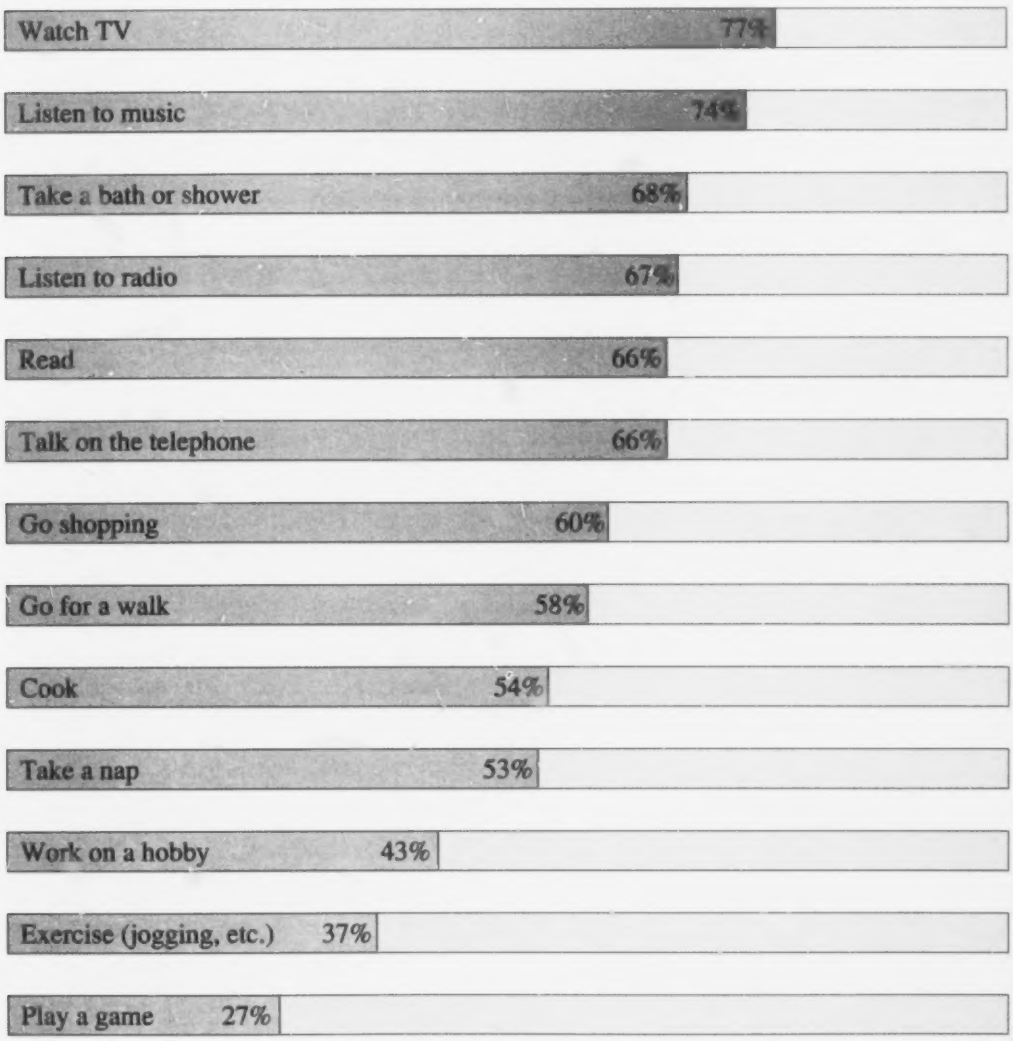


How do women relieve stress at the end of the day? At the top of the list is watching TV (77% often or sometimes do this to relieve stress), and listening to music (74%), followed by taking a bath/shower (68%), listening to the radio (67%), reading (66%), and talking on the telephone (66%).

Cited by between half and two-thirds of women are shopping (60%), going for a walk (58%), cooking (54%), and taking a nap (53%). Between a quarter and a half of women say they work on a hobby to relieve stress (43%), exercise (37%), or play a game (27%).

Less popular antidotes for stress include a cocktail at home (22%), going out to a bar (12%), having a manicure or pedicure (10%), having a massage (9%), going to a spa (8%), and taking a tranquilizer (7%).

When the Going Gets Tough: How Women Relieve Stress
(Percent of women who say often/sometimes)



Women appear to employ a wider variety of stress-relieving activities than men:

- Talking on the phone (66% of women say they do this often or sometimes to relieve stress, versus only 29% of men);
- Shopping (60% versus 30%);
- Cooking (54% versus 30%);
- Taking a bath/shower (68% versus 53%);
- Reading (66% versus 53%); and
- Going for a walk (58% versus 50%).

The only two stress-relieving activities that men are substantially more likely to use than women are having a cocktail at home (33% of men do this often or sometimes to relieve stress, versus 22% of women), and going out to a bar (24% versus 12%). Men are only slightly more likely to engage in exercise such as jogging, aerobics, or swimming (42% compared with 37% of women).

Despite the much-publicized health benefits of active exercise, including its value as a tension reliever, most Americans, women and men alike, appear to prefer sedentary activities as their main antidotes to stress.

Uneasiness in the Streets

Fear of crime appears to add stress to women's lives today. Seventy-two percent of women say they personally feel "more afraid and uneasy on the streets today" than they did a few years ago; fewer men (49%) share this feeling.

Those most likely to feel uneasy are older women (82%), women in the Northeast (80%), and black women (77%).

Virtually the same number of women today as in 1970 report feeling afraid and uneasy on the streets. The number of men feeling this way, however, has dropped from 60% in 1970 to 49% today.

How Feel On the Streets Today Compared with a Few Years Ago
(In percent)

	1970		1990	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
More afraid and uneasy	74	60	72	49
Less afraid and uneasy	3	5	5	7
Not much different	23	35	22	43

3 Between Women And Men: Relationships In The 1990s

BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: RELATIONSHIPS IN THE 1990s

Male/female relations have changed dramatically since 1970. The traditional marriage of the past, in which the man was the provider and the woman took care of the house and family, is no longer what most married couples have or what most Americans want. Relations between women and men are more equal and open than they were 20 years ago. Today when people shape the major relationships in their lives, they face more options than ever before.

The changes are significant. People, of course, are still getting married, and most young people still want to marry eventually. But more are staying single longer, postponing marriage until they are older, and divorcing at a far higher rate than in the early 1970s.

These are a few of the ways family life in 1990 differs from family life in 1970:

- More couples today live together without being married; in fact, the number of cohabiting couples quadrupled between 1970 and 1985.
- Over the same period, the divorce rate rose by 47%; although this trend apparently has stabilized in recent years, it has done so at a record high level.
- Many divorcees remarry, creating complex stepfamily configurations.
- A jump in the number of teen pregnancies, compounded by a high divorce rate, has produced a large number of female-headed households with children, and, in the process "feminized" poverty.
- A few women, mainly well-off professionals, have opted to forego marriage altogether, and are deliberately bearing and raising children on their own.

These changes in family structure and male/female relationships have been accompanied by important shifts in power relations in the home. The idea that men are the providers while women take care of the house and family is no longer widely accepted. In addition, the massive movement of women into the work force has produced economic changes. Because women are not as economically dependent on men as they were 20 years ago, they have gained bargaining power at home as well as in the workplace.

In short, the changes of the last 20 years have created a new climate for male/female relations – a climate of more options and openness, but also of more complications and concerns. Against these changes, the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll provides a look at women's and men's perceptions of male/female relations.

Changing Morals

The Poll shows that Americans have greatly relaxed their attitudes about sexual standards and behavior, and especially about women's independence. For instance, the number who reject the notion that single women should enjoy the same sexual freedom as men has dropped by half over the past 20 years. In 1970, almost two-thirds (65%) of women thought premarital sex was immoral; that number has dropped to 46% today. In 1970, only 11% thought it should be legal for adults to have children without getting married; nearly four times as many (42%) think so today. And acceptance of "trial marriages"– living together before marriage – has doubled.

Changing Morals: 1970 and 1990
(Percent of women agree)

A double moral standard has existed for many years – one standard for women another for men
83%
74%
Legal abortions should be made available for women who choose to have them *
56%
45%
Pre-marital sexual intercourse is immoral
46%
65%
It should be legal for adults to have children without getting married
42%
11%
Where abortions are legal, the decision about an abortion should be left up to the woman alone. The man involved should not be consulted
36%
32%
Trial marriages – in which couples would live together for a certain period of time without legally getting married – would lead to better marriages
29%
15%
Society could survive just as well without the institution of marriage
16%
8%
Single women should not enjoy the same kind of freedom as single men
16%
30%
A single woman who becomes pregnant but doesn't love the man involved should marry him anyway
9%
12%
1990
1970

* In 1970, this item read, "Laws making abortions illegal should be repealed."

Not surprisingly, there are generational differences on these matters. On some items, younger and older women are in virtual agreement; for instance, 82% and 80%, respectively, believe that a double moral standard—one for men and one for women—has existed for many years. In other areas, however, older women are much more conservative than younger women. Older women are more than twice as likely as younger women to believe that premarital sex is immoral (64% versus 31%). Similarly, older women (15%) are much less likely than younger women (45%) to think that living together before marrying would lead to better marriages. And fewer older women (46%) than younger women (65%) think that legal abortions should be available for women who choose to have them.

A look at the attitudes of younger versus older women in 1970 compared with younger versus older women today reveals that Americans across all age groups have become more relaxed in their attitudes toward morality. And while younger women continue to be more liberal than older women, the gap has narrowed significantly on three items—the existence of a double moral standard, whether women should enjoy the same freedom as men, and whether a single pregnant woman should marry the man involved even if she doesn't love him. On the other hand, the gap has gotten larger in attitudes toward premarital sex, trial marriages, and having children out of wedlock.

Changing Morals, 1970 - 1990: Younger Women Versus Older Women
(In percent)

	1970			1990		
Agree:	Younger women (18-29)	Older women (50+)	Point Difference	Younger women (18-29)	Older women (50+)	Point Difference
A double moral standard has existed for many years--one standard for women, another for men	81	67	-14	82	80	- 2
Legal abortions should be available for women who choose to have them *	52	34	-18	65	46	-19
Premarital sexual intercourse is immoral	50	77	+27	- 31	64	+33
It should be legal for adults to have children without getting married	19	5	-14	60	23	-37
Where abortions are legal, the decision about an abortion should be left up to the woman alone. The man involved should not be consulted	32	31	- 1	37	33	- 4
Trial marriages--in which couples would live together for a certain period of time without legally getting married--would lead to better marriages	29	6	-23	45	15	-30
Society could survive just as well without the institution of marriage	14	4	-10	24	10	-14
Single women should not enjoy the same kind of freedom as single men	25	34	+ 9	15	17	+ 2
A single woman who becomes pregnant but doesn't love the man involved should marry him anyway	7	19	+12	7	11	+ 4

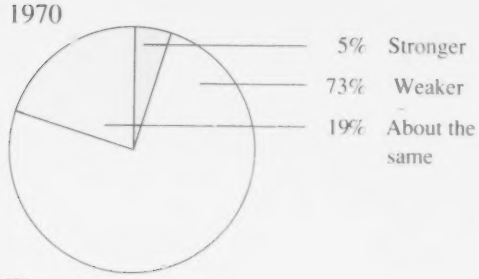
* In 1970, this item read, "Laws making abortions illegal should be repealed."

Marriage: Still the Preferred Lifestyle, But There is Room for Improvement

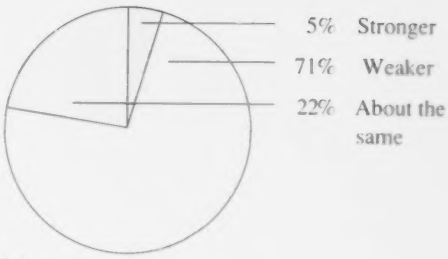
Well over half of women (61%) and men (62%) believe that marriage is not as strong an institution as it once was. People are less pessimistic about marriage today, however, than they were in 1970, when 73% of women and 71% of men thought that marriage was weaker than it had been in the past.

Marriage as an Institution: Stronger or Weaker?

1970

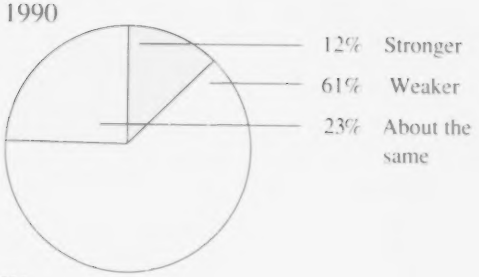


Women

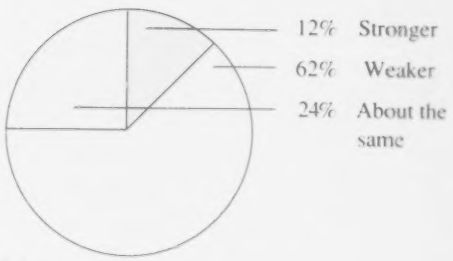


Men

1990



Women



Men

Despite their reservations about marriage, most women continue to choose it. Today 61% of women are married and living with their spouses. This is virtually the same number as in 1985, though somewhat fewer than in 1980.

Living Situations of Women and Men
(In percent)

	1980		1985		1990	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Married and living with spouse	66	68	62	62	61	61
Living with someone as though married *	2	2	3	4	4	5
Living with other adult(s)	13	20	15	22	13	17
No other adult in household	18	9	19	12	21	17

* Slightly different wording from 1980 and 1985, when item read, "Living with someone as husband and wife though not married."

In 1990, the ideal marriage is based on a shared division of labor. A majority of women (53%) and men (50%) say that a marriage where the husband and wife share responsibilities more (with both working outside the home and jointly taking care of housekeeping and child-rearing) offers the most satisfying and interesting life, while 38% and 39%, respectively, favor a traditional marriage.

The number of women who say the shared-responsibility marriage is the ideal has decreased slightly (by 4 percentage points) since 1985. But the number of men preferring this ideal has not changed – in fact, the number of men favoring a traditional marriage continues to decline.

The Most Satisfying Lifestyles: Women
(In percent)

	1974	1980	1985	1990
Marriage where husband and wife share responsibilities more – both work, share housekeeping and child-care responsibilities	46	52	57	53
Traditional marriage with husband assuming responsibility for providing for family and wife running house and taking care of children	50	42	37	38
Living with someone of opposite sex, but not marrying	3	2	2	3
Remaining single and living alone	1	2	2	2
Remaining single and living with others of the same sex	-	-	-	-
Living in large family of people with similar interests in which some are married and some are not	1	1	1	1
None/don't know	2	2	2	3

The Most Satisfying Lifestyles: Men
(In percent)

	1974	1980	1985	1990
Marriage where husband and wife share responsibilities more – both work, share housekeeping and child-care responsibilities	44	49	50	50
Traditional marriage with husband assuming responsibility for providing for family and wife running house and taking care of children	48	42	43	39
Living with someone of opposite sex, but not marrying	1	4	3	4
Remaining single and living alone	1	2	3	3
Remaining single and living with others of the same sex	-	-	1	1
Living in large family of people with similar interests in which some are married and some are not	1	1	1	1
None/don't know	2	2	1	3

On this question, perhaps the most interesting shift in attitudes in the last five years has been among employed women. Overwhelming majorities of working women feel the ideal marriage is one that is based on shared responsibilities; for instance, women working full-time prefer the shared marriage over the traditional by a margin of nearly 3 to 1 (67% to 24%). Interestingly, though, the number saying a shared marriage is ideal has declined 6 points since 1985, while the number saying the traditional marriage is ideal has increased by 5 points.

Why this shift? Some results in the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll show a similar change in women's attitudes toward their work and family responsibilities. The increasing strains, pressures, and demands that working women face both at work and at home appear to be leading about 1 working woman in 20 to change her mind about the ideal marriage. Other Poll data, however, indicate that women work primarily for financial reasons—and they are therefore likely to continue working. Women, it seems, are beginning to experience tension between what is *ideal* and what is *possible*. This tension is likely to cause further conflicts in the coming years and give rise to demands for new solutions in either the workplace or at home... or both. (See Chapter 5, "Worker, Mother, Wife".)

The Most Satisfying Lifestyles: By Women's Employment Status
(In percent)

	1985			1990		
	Full time	Part time	Not employed	Full time	Part time	Not employed
Marriage where husband and wife share responsibilities more – both work, share housekeeping and child-care responsibilities	73	58	44	67	59	40
Traditional marriage with husband assuming responsibility for providing for family, and wife running house and taking care of children	19	35	51	24	33	52
Living with someone of opposite sex, but not marrying	2	2	1	3	2	2
Remaining single and living alone	3	3	1	2	2	2
Remaining single and living with others of the same sex	1	-	-	-	1	-
Living in large family of people with similar interests in which some are married and some are not	1	1	1	1	-	1
None/don't know	2	2	-	2	3	3

What Makes a Good Marriage?

Being in love, sexual fidelity, and the ability to talk with one another about feelings are considered the most important elements of a good marriage.

While most of the qualities rated very important to a good marriage have not changed over the years, other elements have become more important. Sixty-three percent of women and 61% of men, for example, now consider financial security to be part of a good marriage today, compared with only 49% of both groups in 1974. Keeping romance alive is now viewed as more important, too; it is cited by 78% of women and 76% of men today, versus 71% of women and 66% of men in 1974.

What Makes a Good Marriage?
(In percent)

	1974		1990	
Things considered "very important":	Women	Men	Women	Men
Being in love	90	86	87	84
Spouse's sexual fidelity	79	70	85	78
Being able to talk together about your feelings	88	83	84	76
Keeping romance alive	71	66	78	76
Both being able to see humorous side of things	78	70	76	69
Having similar ideas on how to raise children	74	64	72	63
Having a good sexual relationship	77	73	72	74
Having similar ideas on how to handle money	68	61	71	65
Spouse understanding what you do everyday	62	52	67	57
Liking the same kind of life, activities, friends	68	64	64	62
Financial security	49	49	63	61
Having children	51	51	48	41
Having similar backgrounds	28	23	34	29

"If I Had It To Do Over"

About 30% of those married or living as married admit that they sometimes meet someone they think would make them happier than their present partner. Of these, most women (21%) and men (24%) say this happens only occasionally, while fewer say they very often or fairly often meet someone with whom they think they would be happier.

Employed women and men are more likely to feel this way than those who stay at home, perhaps because they have more opportunities to meet and spend time with new people. Likewise, younger people, those who are college-educated and those who live in urban areas are more likely to feel this way.

How Often You Meet Someone You'd be Happier With Than Your Present Partner
(Based on married or living as married)
(In percent)

	Women	Men
Very often	2	3
Fairly often	4	3
Only occassionally	21	24
Never	69	65
Don't know	3	5

Room for Improvement

If given the chance to improve their relationship, what one aspect would people most like to change? Finances and the amount of time they spend with their mate are cited by virtually equal numbers of married women and men (or those living together as though married) as aspects of their relationship they would most like to improve. More than a third of both sexes would like to improve communication with their mate.

Room for Improvement in Marriages
(Based on married or living as married)
(In percent)

Top two choices combined:	Women	Men
Finances	43	41
The amount of time you spend together	42	44
The way you communicate with each other	36	34
Sharing of household chores	28	11
The way your children are being raised	7	7
Sex	6	10
Nothing (volunteered)	11	17
Don't know	2	4

Who Controls the Finances?

A majority of married couples report that they jointly handle all major financial decisions. Married couples and couples living as if married structure the family budget, make overall financial plans, decide how much insurance to carry, and how much to spend on vacation. Women in the household, though, are more likely than men to actually sit down and pay the bills.

Who Handles the Finances?
(Based on married or living as married)
(In percent)

	Joint responsibility		Women tend to handle		Men tend to handle	
	Women say "We do"	Men say "We do"	Women say "I do"	Men say "She does"	Women say "He does"	Men say "I do"
How much to spend on a vacation	65	67	15	12	14	15
What kind and how much other insurance to carry (household, car, etc.)	57	57	14	11	26	27
What kind and how much life insurance to carry	55	56	14	11	25	27
Overall financial planning (how much to save, invest, pay on bills, etc.)	54	57	26	15	18	24
Setting up and holding to a family budget	53	57	26	19	13	17
Paying utility bills (electricity, phone, etc.)	29	35	46	35	23	28
Paying credit card or department store bills	29	34	44	33	19	24
Paying the mortgage or rent	28	33	41	30	24	29

The Ideal Family Size

The size of the ideal family has been shrinking. For instance, in a survey taken in 1941 by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), about 7 in 10 women and men thought that 3 or more children made an ideal family. Only about 4 in 10 think so today. In 1941, only about 3 out of 10 women and men considered two children or less ideal. Today, 6 out of 10 think so, with the majority of both women (52%) and men (58%) saying that two children would make the ideal family.

The Single Life

Majorities of single adult Americans consider themselves happier than most of their married friends. And majorities of women (60%) and men (70%) say that being single is a lot easier than being married. Nevertheless, about 7 in 10 singles say they "hope to be married someday, but right now the timing just isn't right."

Many more single women (65%) than men (42%) say that most single people they meet are unwilling to make a serious commitment. Majorities of women (57%) and men (51%) observe that most of the single people they meet "don't know what they're doing with their lives." More women (73%) than men (57%) agree that it is difficult these days to find new people to date.

Among single people who say they date at least occasionally, the threat of sexually transmitted diseases is a very big concern. Majorities feel that it's important to get to know someone well before starting a physical relationship. And while most say that the people they know now take precautions against sexually transmitted diseases, two-thirds of women and 57% of men say that the threat of AIDS and of other sexually transmitted diseases has made them less sexually active.

The Single Life
(Among those who date at least on occasion)
(In percent)

Strongly/Generally Agree:	Single Women	Single Men
It is very difficult these days to find new people to date	73	57
I hope to be married someday, but right now the timing just isn't right	69	72
The threat of AIDS has made me less sexually active	67	57
The threat of other sexually transmitted diseases has made me less sexually active	65	57
Most singles I meet are unwilling to make a serious commitment	65	42
Being single is a lot easier than being married	60	70
Most of the singles I meet don't know what they're doing with their lives	57	51
I'm happier than most of my married friends	56	59
Most singles I know are unwilling to take precautions against sexually transmitted diseases	35	27
The demands of my job give me little time for a social life	33	40
Most of the men/women I'm interested in going out with are already married	29	24
It isn't all that important to get to know someone well before having a physical relationship with them	18	31

The AIDS Crisis

Most Americans say that they know someone who has changed his or her behavior or attitudes toward dating, relationships, and sexual practices due to the risk of AIDS.

Women say that, to the extent the people they know have modified their attitudes or behavior, they have changed a lot (28%) or some (23%). Virtually equal numbers of men report this extent of change among the people they know.

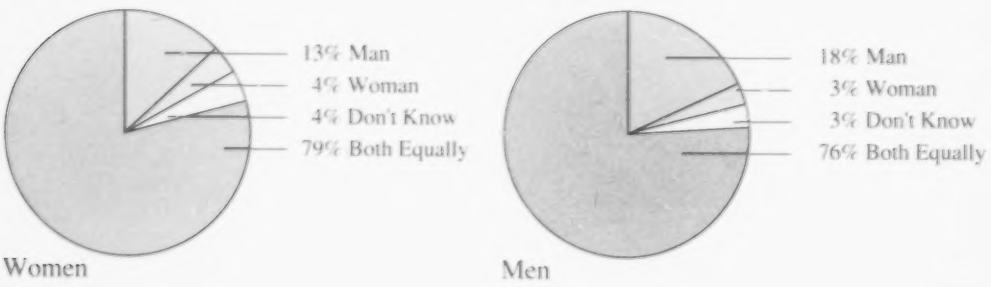
The AIDS Epidemic
(In percent)

Due to the risk posed by AIDS, people I know who are sexually active have changed their attitudes or behavior...

	Total Women	Total Men
A lot	28	28
Some	23	22
A little	11	13
Not really at all	12	14
Don't know anyone who dates or is sexually active	16	12
Don't know	11	10

Despite these changes, most women (86%) and men (87%) believe that the people they know who date or are sexually active should be even more responsible in light of the risk of AIDS. As for who should take primary responsibility – the man or the woman – for protecting against AIDS, an overwhelming majority of people say both partners should be equally responsible. More than three-quarters of both women and men offered this response.

Protecting Against AIDS:Who Should Take Responsibility?

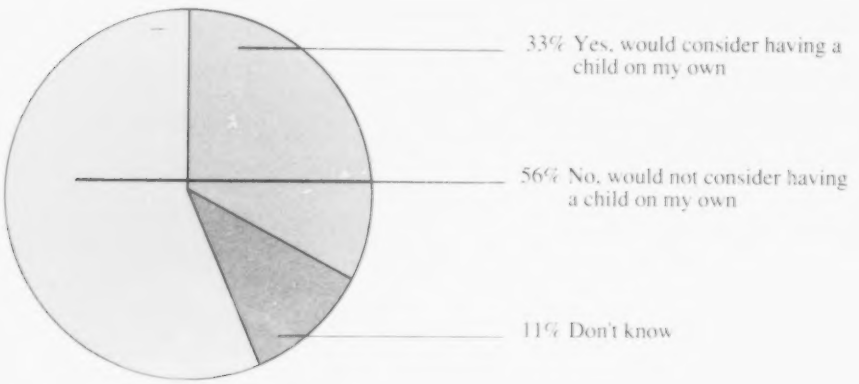


Choosing Single Parenthood

A third of all women say that if they were single and nearing the end of their childbearing years, they would consider bearing a child without getting married. More than half (56%) say they would not consider it, and 12% aren't sure. Most likely to consider this option: women who are single (50%), or separated and divorced (44%), or who already have children (40%).

Among the reasons given by those who would not consider having a child on their own: children need both parents (37%); and it would involve too much responsibility and hard work to raise a child alone (24%).

Choosing Single Parenthood
(Total women)



Opinions About Men

Women are more critical of men today than they were 20 years ago. Asked to say whether various descriptions of men were mostly accurate or not, more women today than in 1970 choose to portray men in a negative light on almost every item.

In particular, women are far more likely now to say that most men look at a woman and immediately think about what it would be like to go to bed with her, or that most men are interested in their work and life outside the home and don't pay much attention to things going on at home. Women are far less likely than they were 20 years ago to say that most men are basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful.

Women's Opinions About Men

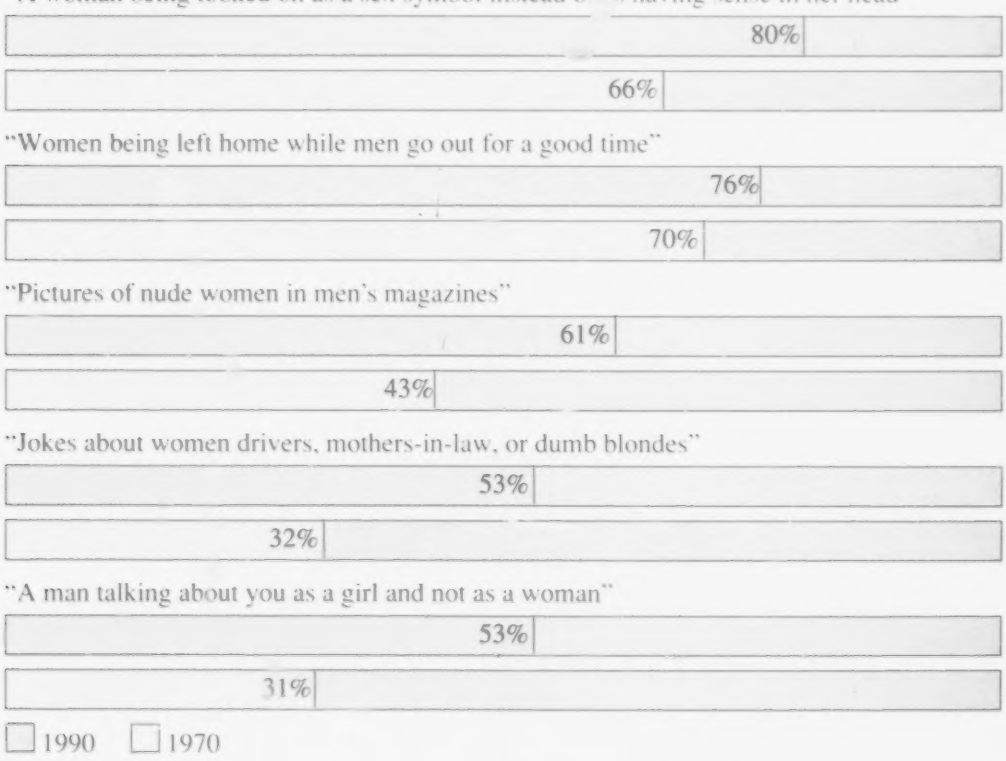
Most men think only their own opinions about the world are important.
58%
50%
Most men find it necessary for their egos to keep women down.
55%
49%
Most men look at a woman and immediately think how it would be to go to bed with her
54%
41%
Most men are interested in their work and life outside the home and don't pay much attention to things going on at home.
53%
39%
Most men are basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful.
51%
67%
Most men are more interested in their own, rather than a woman's, sexual satisfaction.
50%
40%
Most men are basically selfish and self-centered.
42%
32%
1990
1970

Why are women increasingly critical of men? It is unlikely that men are objectively more selfish and self-centered than they were in 1970; men's actual conduct, if anything, probably has improved. What *has* changed is women's sense of their proper entitlement. As more men and women have abandoned traditional roles and attempted to negotiate new terms for their relationships, women's expectations have shifted. The more independent women of today expect more from men and want more out of relationships.

Not surprisingly, behavior regarded as sexist in 1970 bothers even greater numbers of American women today. More than half of women say they are bothered by every example of sexism we asked about. For example, 8 in 10 women today say it annoys them when "a woman is looked at as a sex symbol instead of as having sense in her head." Three-quarters get annoyed at "women being left home while men go out for a good time." Sixty-one percent are irritated by pictures of nude women in men's magazines, and more than half (53%) are bothered when a man talks about them as a "girl" and not a "woman." An equal number (53%) don't like jokes about women drivers, mothers-in-law, or dumb blondes.

Whether Various Items Annoy Women

Annoys Women Somewhat/A lot:

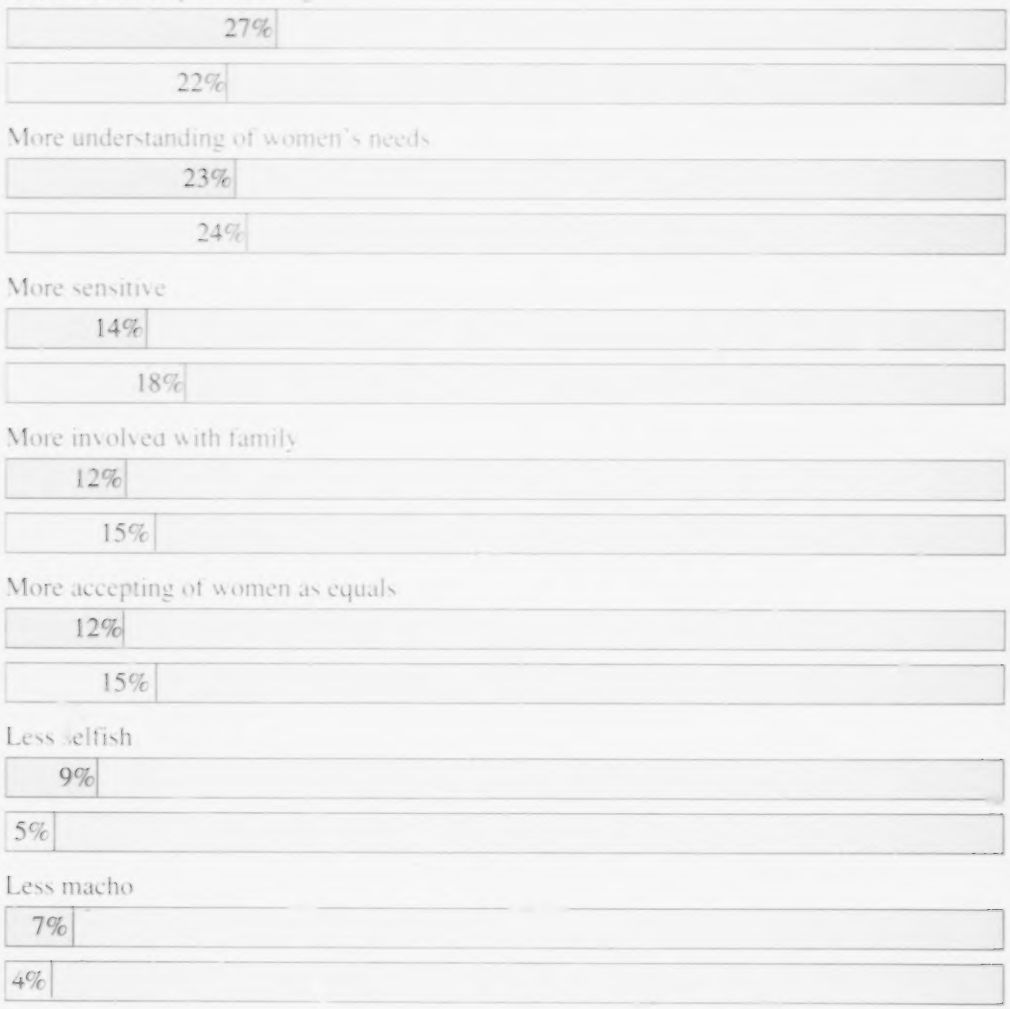

"A woman being looked on as a sex symbol instead of as having sense in her head"
80%
66%
"Women being left home while men go out for a good time"
76%
70%
"Pictures of nude women in men's magazines"
61%
43%
"Jokes about women drivers, mothers-in-law, or dumb blondes"
53%
32%
"A man talking about you as a girl and not as a woman"
53%
31%
1990
1970

If women had a magic wand, what would they most like to change about men? And what do *men* think women would most like to see changed about them? The answers are similar. Men have a good idea of the areas in which women would like to see improvement.

- If women could change one thing, most would want men to be better able to express their feelings (27%).
- Almost as many women (23%) say the one thing they would like is for men to better understand women's needs.

Very similar numbers of men pick each of these items as the things women would most like to see changed about men.

What One Thing Would Women Change About Men?



4 Women In The Workplace

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

More American women work outside the home today than ever before. Over half of all adult women work in the paid labor force—either full-time or part-time. Many of those who are not working today will enter the work force in the future.

Given these facts, it is easy to forget that in 1970 just getting into the workplace was often a major victory for women. An initial concern of the women's movement was to break down workplace barriers and gain access for women to many jobs that were not open to them. Today, merely getting into the workplace is no longer enough; the terms of employment – salaries, promotions, and benefits – are what matter. How are employers treating women compared with men? The Poll shows that many women believe they are still coming up short.

Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace

A majority of women and men believe that women still suffer discrimination on the job. In many work-related areas, more people than in 1970 believe there is workplace discrimination. For example, Americans are more likely to say that women are discriminated against in obtaining top jobs in business, the professions, and government than 20 years ago. Higher numbers also say there is discrimination against women in getting skilled labor jobs.

But while perceptions of discrimination in most work-related areas have increased in the last 20 years, in other areas—access to education, obtaining loans and mortgages, getting top jobs in the arts, and getting clerical jobs (most of which are held by women anyway)—discrimination is seen to have remained about the same or decreased.

Women's and men's attitudes toward discrimination have differed somewhat over the 20-year history of the Virginia Slims Opinion Poll. More women than men perceive discrimination against women. But like women, more men today than in 1970 say that women are discriminated against in a variety of job-related situations.

In What Areas Do Women Experience Discrimination?
(Women's responses, in percent)

Agree that women are discriminated against in:	1970	1990
Obtaining top jobs in government	51 *	64
Obtaining executive jobs in business	50	61
Obtaining top jobs in professions	40	58
Obtaining jobs in the military	42 ***	55
Getting skilled labor jobs	40	52
Being given leadership responsibility in groups with both men and women	39	47
Obtaining loans/mortgages/charge accounts in their own names	56 **	41
Obtaining top jobs in arts	21	21
Getting into graduate/professional school	27 **	19
Getting white collar/clerical jobs	17	19
Getting a college education	11	10

*1972 Data **1974 Data ***1985 Data

Why, after 20 years of major changes in women's status, is there an increased perception of discrimination in many areas? Most likely it is because perceptions of what constitutes discrimination have changed over the years. Denying a woman a job in a steel mill was not considered discriminatory in 1970. It is today.

There is also greater awareness about more subtle forms of discrimination, such as the much-discussed "glass-ceiling," said to block female managers from reaching the top ranks in business.

Improvements Made, Yet Changes Needed

As reported in Chapter One, most people agree that working women have come a long way since 1970. Overwhelming majorities of women and men say that times have improved for women in all of the work-related areas we surveyed. When we asked what needs to change in the next decade to make women's lives better, respondents said that the *same* areas that have shown improvement are *also* in need of major changes.

Why this seeming contradiction? One possible answer is that greater job and professional exposure has made women more aware of wage discrimination, limited support for better child-care options, and barriers to attaining leadership positions. While there has been progress, both men and women agree that there is still room for more.

The Workplace: Improvements Made, Changes Needed
(In percent)

Women say things have improved in the workplace...	Improved	Hasn't changed	Gotten worse
The kinds of jobs open to women	89	5	4
The salaries women are paid compared with what men are paid	86	8	4
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in business	79	12	6
The day-care options available to working mothers	72	10	14
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in government	71	18	7
Women's roles as homemakers	37	23	37
Women's roles as mothers	36	20	41
The kinds of marriages women have	34	16	45

Yet they say further changes are needed to make their lives better...	Major changes are needed	Some changes are needed	No real changes are needed
The salaries women are paid compared with what men are paid	50	43	5
The day-care options available to working mothers	47	42	7
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in government	45	45	7
Women's opportunities for leadership positions in business	44	46	7
The kinds of jobs open to women	42	48	8
The kinds of marriages women have	35	43	17
Women's roles as mothers	30	46	20
Women's roles as homemakers	29	46	21

Women and Their Jobs

Beyond these general opinions about women's status in the workplace, how do women actually feel about their own jobs and work experience? To answer this question, it is important to understand who is working--and why.

More than half of all adult American women currently are employed either full-time or part-time outside the home. The rates are highest among those in their childbearing years: 69% of women aged 25-34 and 73% of those 35-44 are now working or looking for work. More than two-thirds of all women with children under age 18 work either part- or full-time. Half of new mothers are back at work before their child's first birthday.

Why do women work? The vast majority cite economic reasons. Most women are working primarily to support their families (31%) or to support themselves (24%). And another 32% say they work to bring in extra money. Only 8% say they work for something interesting to do or for some other reason (3%).

For many women, then, work is a necessity. In fact, the number of women working to support their family has increased 12 percentage points since 1980. Married couples increasingly need two incomes to support a family. Further, the increase in the number of female-headed households—caused in part by later marriages, higher divorce rates, and an increase in single parenting—has made it imperative for many women to bring home a paycheck.

As might be expected, single women are more likely than others to work primarily to support themselves, divorced or separated women are most likely to work to support their family, and married women are most likely to work to bring in extra money. Women who work full-time are far more likely to say they work to support themselves or their family than part-time employees, who work mostly to bring in extra money.

Women's Reasons for Working
(In percent)

	1980 Total employed women	1990 Employed Women						
		Total	Single	Married	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Full time	Part time
To support self	27	24	68	3	47	45	30	10
To support family	19	31	14	34	45	17	36	18
To bring in extra money	43	32	11	46	5	16	24	54
For something interesting to do	14	8	2	12	2	15	6	14
Other reasons	-	3	3	4	-	2	3	3
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1

For most working women a job means a satisfying, interesting life as well as money. Only 27% see the traditional housewife role—marrying and having children but not a career—as offering the most interesting life. In contrast, more than twice that number (57%) say they would prefer to combine a career with marriage and children.

The number saying that they would ideally prefer to combine marriage, children, and a career has dropped 6 points since 1985. However, this does not mean that more women prefer to marry and have children at the expense of a career. Rather, the change suggests that some women prefer other options altogether. Today, slightly more say they would prefer to have a career and marry but not have children (up 2 points), or to have a career but not marry or have children (up 2 points). More women also say they "don't know" which they prefer (up 3 points).

Preferences for Marriage, Children and Career
(In percent)

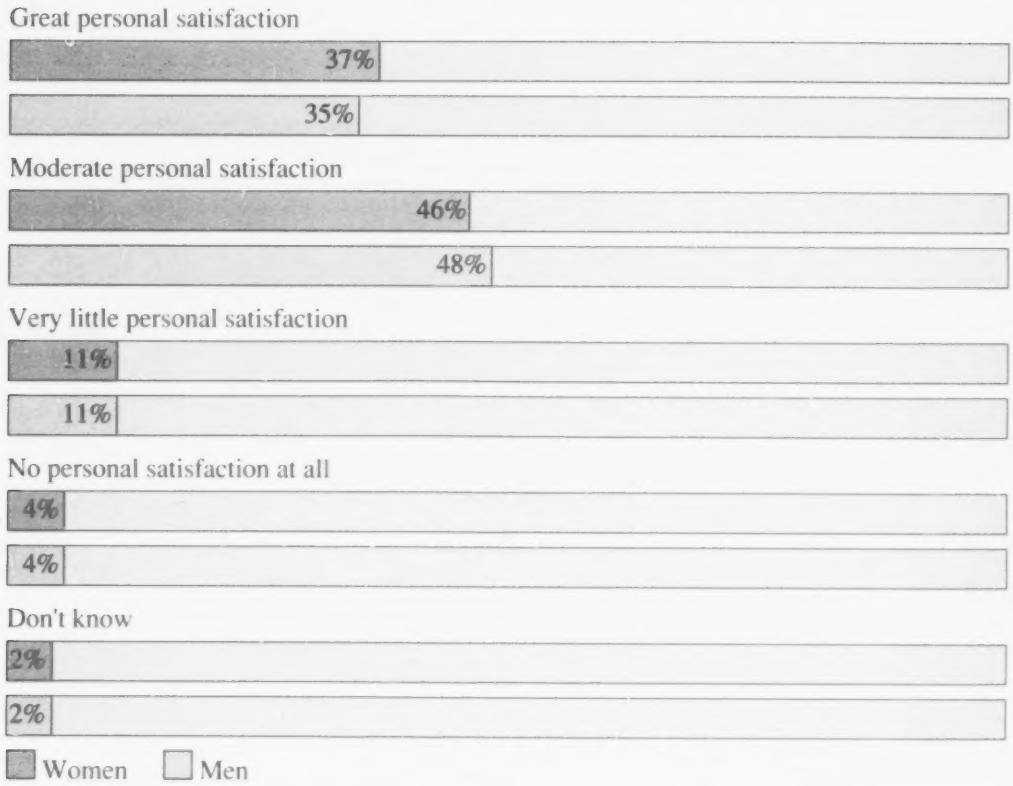
	1974	1985	1990
Combining marriage, career and children	52	63	57
Marrying and having children, but not having a career	38	26	27
Having a career and marrying, but not having children	4	4	6
Having a career, but not marrying or having children	2	3	5
Marrying, but not having children or a career	1	1	1
Don't know	3	2	5

Satisfaction on the Job

Most Americans—more than 8 in 10—say they like their jobs. Both women and men are more likely to say they are fairly well satisfied rather than extremely satisfied with their jobs. Fifty-eight percent of women are fairly well satisfied; another quarter are extremely satisfied. More executive and professional women (92%) say they are satisfied with their jobs than do white-collar (81%) or blue-collar (79%) women.

When asked how much personal satisfaction they get from their job "aside from the money," more women say they derive "moderate" (46%) than "great" personal satisfaction (37%). Women who report the greatest personal satisfaction tend, again, to be executive or professional (59%) rather than white collar (30%) or blue collar (27%). Not surprisingly, college-educated women are most likely to say they derive great personal satisfaction from their jobs (45%), versus 30% of high school graduates and just 25% of women who didn't finish high school.

Satisfaction from Working, Aside from Money



Ways to Increase Job Satisfaction

No matter how much people like their jobs, they can always think of ways to make them better.

Male and female respondents provide nearly identical assessments of what could lead to more job satisfaction. Incentive or bonus programs for higher productivity top the list for both women (55%) and men (58%). Equal numbers of both groups (53%) say that better health benefits and medical coverage would lead to more job satisfaction. Other top items for both sexes are: less pressure, more rewarding responsibilities, more flexible work hours, and more feedback from the boss.

Women and men diverge in two respects. Women are twice as likely as men (31% vs. 15%) to think that an on-site day-care center would improve their job satisfaction. And more women than men (28% compared with 20%) say that better parental-leave and maternity-leave options would make a difference. (The concerns of working parents will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.)

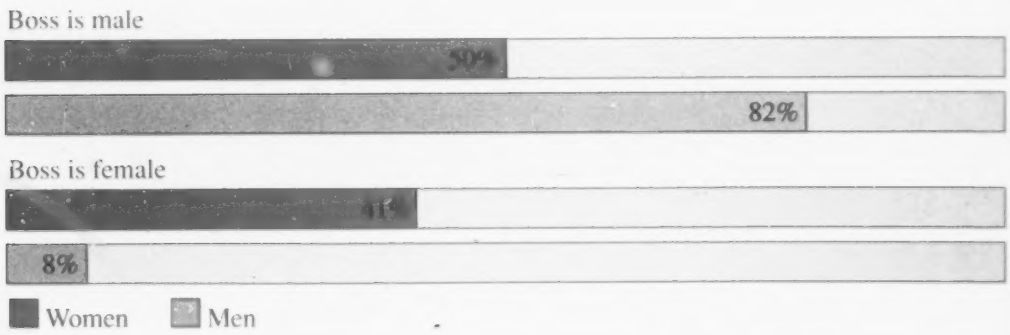
What Would Make Your Job More Satisfying?
(In percent)

Would make job much more/somewhat more satisfying:	Women	Men
Incentive or bonus programs for higher productivity	55	58
Better health benefits (HMOs, more medical coverage, dental coverage)	53	53
Being under less pressure at work	46	46
More rewarding tasks/responsibilities	43	44
More flexible work hours (flextime, voluntary part-time, job sharing, leaves)	42	40
More feed-back from boss/manager	42	42
Having a more understanding boss	38	39
A company-run on-site day-care center	31	15
Better maternity-leave, parental-leave options	28	20
More opportunity to work at home	27	25

Who's the Boss?

A woman is five times as likely as a man to have a female boss. Only 8% of men report to a female, while 41% of women do. Or stated another way, 82% of men work for a male, while only 8% work for a female. These data show that to the extent that women have achieved power in the workplace, it is mostly over other women. Given this uneven distribution of power, it is not surprising that many women and men agree that women encounter discrimination in getting top jobs in business, government, and the professions.

Who's the Boss?
(Whether person report to is male or female)



Most male and female workers say their immediate supervisors support their goals on and off the job. Half of working women rate their boss as "very" supportive, and 33% say "somewhat" supportive; responses are similar for male workers.

Women generally do not rate female bosses as being more supportive than male bosses. But concerning the issue of maternity leave, more women with female bosses think their boss would be understanding and supportive than do women with male bosses. Sixty-three percent of women who report to a female say their boss would be totally supportive and understanding, as compared with 49% of those who report to a male.

The Ideal Job

Although working women and men consider their bosses supportive, many Americans would rather be their *own* boss. Asked about the ideal job owning a business of one's own is the top choice for women (23%) and, by an even wider margin, for men (40%). A career in a profession such as law or medicine is the next most popular. More men than women favor a career in a large business organization. And probably due to family responsibilities, women are five times as likely as men to think an ideal situation would be a part-time job, or no outside job at all.

Even among women who are not employed, 7 in 10 say their ideal job situation would involve some kind of work outside the home. Less than a quarter (23%) ideally choose no outside job at all.

Ideal Job or Career
(In percent)

	Women			Men		
	Total	Employed	Not Employed	Total	Employed	Not Employed
A business of one's own	23	28	17	40	41	34
A career in a profession (law, medicine, etc.)	16	19	13	16	17	12
A job that is interesting, but less demanding than a career	14	14	13	10	10	12
A career in a large business organization	9	11	6	14	13	14
A career in a small business	9	11	7	12	12	12
No outside job at all	13	5	23	3	2	8
A part-time job that helps bring in extra money	12	8	16	2	2	4
Don't know	4	3	6	3	3	4

A Career or Just a Job?

Whether someone views employment as a "career" or "just a job" depends heavily on occupation, education, and income level. A majority of employed women (53%) think of their work as just a job and a majority of men - 57% - think of their work as a career. But the attitudes of executive and professional women and men are virtually the same. As educational attainment and income increase for both men and women, so does the proportion of people who think of their jobs as careers. And women who work part-time are much more likely than those employed full-time to think of their work as just a job (51% versus 29%).

Somewhat more women today (45%) than in 1985 (41%) think of their work as a career, while fewer today (53%) compared with then (58%) think of it as just a job. Among full-time working women, a majority – for the first time – say they look upon their work as a career. Men's views remained virtually unchanged since 1985, with 57% today versus 56% in 1985 thinking of their work as a career, and 40% today versus 43% then saying their job is just a job.

Women's Work: A Career or "Just a Job"?
(In percent)

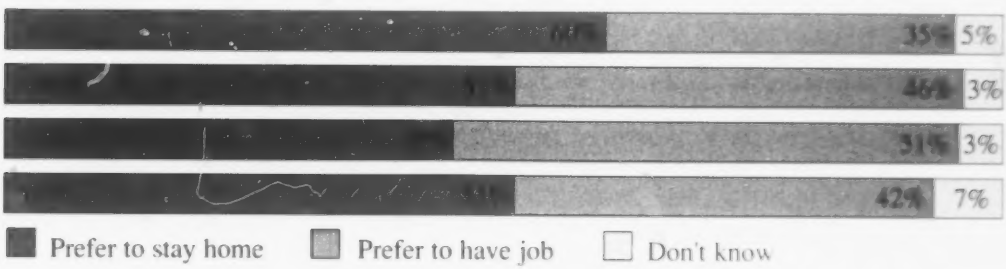
	Career	Just a job	Don't know
Total employed women	45	53	2
18 to 29	37	61	2
30 to 39	52	46	2
40 to 49	48	51	1
50 and over	43	54	3
Non-high school graduate	19	78	3
High-school graduate	34	65	2
College	59	39	2
Under $15,000 household income	26	72	2
$15,000 to $25,000	37	61	2
$25,000 to $35,000	48	51	1
$35,000 and over	59	40	1
Employed full-time	51	47	2
Employed part-time	29	69	2
Executive/professional	81	18	1
White collar	37	61	2
Blue collar	24	74	1
White	46	52	2
Black	40	57	2
Total employed men	57	40	3

Work or Stay Home?

Since 1974, women have been asked, "If you were free to do either, would you prefer to have a job outside the home, or prefer to stay home and take care of a house and family?"

About half (51%) of all women today say that they would prefer to stay home, and 42% of all women would prefer to have a job. The preferences for work over staying home rose steadily from 1979 to 1985, when 51% of women said they would prefer a job and 45% said they would prefer to stay home. Since 1985, preference for a job has declined. The change back to 1980 levels is consistent with other Poll data showing a slight shift in attitudes relating to the strains, pressures, and demands many working women face.

Preference for a Job Compared with Staying at Home
(Total women)



Demographic data suggest that the shift in attitude results less from a new yearning to be home than from a diminished level of enthusiasm for work. Older women, for instance, are much less likely to prefer a job than younger women. And it is precisely among older women that the biggest decline has come in the preference for a job: a 14 percentage point decline among women 50 and older, versus a 4 point decline for women 18 to 29.

That the preference for home over job is more likely to prevail among older women than among women in their childbearing years suggests that the main cause of the shift in preferring home over job is not that women want to give up working in order to become full-time mothers. More likely, the shift is due to the fact that many older women are not "career" women; when they entered the labor force, many were confined to low-paying, low-potential jobs. Staying at home also may seem more preferable to being employed for many older women who are working more for extra spending money than out of economic necessity.

Another reason why older women may prefer home to job is that older women are less educated than younger women. The Poll shows that women who are less educated are more likely to want to stay home. Less-educated women also derive the least income and personal satisfaction from their jobs—another reason to prefer home to the workplace.

Preference for a Job Compared to Staying at Home: Breakdown By Demographic Groups
(In percent)

	Prefer to stay home		Prefer to have job		Don't know	
	1985	1990	1985	1990	1985	1990
Total Women	45	51	51	42	3	7
Single	21	28	75	66	4	6
Married	52	55	44	37	4	8
Divorced/separated	30	45	69	51	1	4
Widowed	53	65	44	27	3	8
White	49	54	47	40	4	7
Black	21	31	77	60	2	8
18 to 29	38	38	58	54	3	7
30 to 39	46	53	51	42	3	6
40 to 49	41	45	55	48	4	7
50 and over	52	62	45	31	3	7
Non-high school graduate	50	59	47	33	2	8
High school graduate	48	52	50	40	3	7
College	39	45	56	48	5	7
Employed full-time	28	36	69	57	3	7
Employed part-time	44	50	51	44	5	6
Not employed	59	63	38	29	3	7

Other findings of the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll also suggest that dissatisfaction with work, more than a yearning for home, influenced responses to this question: many women say they are not getting a fair shake in the workplace.

For example, more than half of employed women feel they deserve greater pay parity with men. Many feel that, while women have made dramatic gains in many occupations previously closed to them, these initial strides have not been followed by a rapid rise of women to the top of American business and government. The pace of change may have slowed at the same time that women's perceptions of discrimination increased. In fact, these changes may have spurred an even faster rise in women's expectations, resulting in an "expectations gap." In short, the Poll results suggest that the more experience women gain in the workplace, the more problems and limits they see.

5 Worker, Mother, Wife

WORKER, MOTHER, WIFE

At some point in their lives, most women wear one of three hats—worker, mother, wife. Today, many women wear all three at once. With more women working than ever before, the role of worker, mother, wife has become as familiar as that of worker, father, husband.

How do American women feel about this triple role? How do they regard the rewards and responsibilities of their various jobs at home and at work? What practical problems do these women face? And what would they like to see changed to make their lives easier?

Conflicts At Home and At Work

Nine out of 10 working women with children feel that, all in all, they do a good job of balancing their job and family. However, this balancing act comes at a price. Two-thirds of women working full-time feel, either strongly or to a certain extent, that the conflicting demands of families and job impose a lot of stress. Majorities feel guilty that they don't spend more time with their families, and feel badly about leaving their kids in the morning.

Though 83% of women working full-time say their jobs or careers are going well, many say that at times their jobs conflict with their other roles as wives and mothers. Fifty-five percent say that the nature of their job makes it harder for them to do things for their family. Overtime or late hours create problems for nearly half. Twenty-nine percent agree that in order to get ahead in the job, it is important to focus primarily on work—even at a sacrifice of attention to the family.

At the same time, family responsibilities often cause women on-the-job problems. Thirty-one percent of women employed full-time "really wish" that their family was more understanding about the demands of their job, and 29% say that their family's needs make it hard for them to devote complete attention to work.

Family responsibilities are more likely to affect a woman's job than a man's; husbands and wives do not share such burdens equally. For instance, when asked what happens when their child's day-care arrangements fall through, working mothers are twice as likely as their male counterparts (fathers with working wives) to say that it causes problems for them at work. In other words, the worker, mother, wife is more likely to pick up the slack than the worker, father, husband.

Job-Related Conflicts
(Women employed full-time with children)
(In percent)

Feel Strongly/To a Certain Extent:	
The conflicting demands of family and job put me under a lot of stress.	61
I feel guilty that I don't spend more time with my family.	56
Having the type of job I do makes it harder for me to do things for my family.	55
I feel bad about leaving my kids in the morning when I go to work.	54
Working overtime or staying late creates conflicts for me.	49
In order to get along better at work, it's important for me to socialize with the people I work with.	41
When my children's day-care arrangements fall through, and I'm late or absent, it causes problems at work.	36
I really wish my family was more understanding about the demands of my job.	31
The demands of my family life make it hard for me to devote complete attention to my job.	29
In order to get ahead at my job it's important that I focus primarily on work, even if it means I pay less attention for a while to my family life.	29
My supervisor doesn't understand that I have family responsibilities, too.	28
My boss doesn't give me as much responsibility as I'd like because he/she is concerned my family responsibilities take up too much time.	17

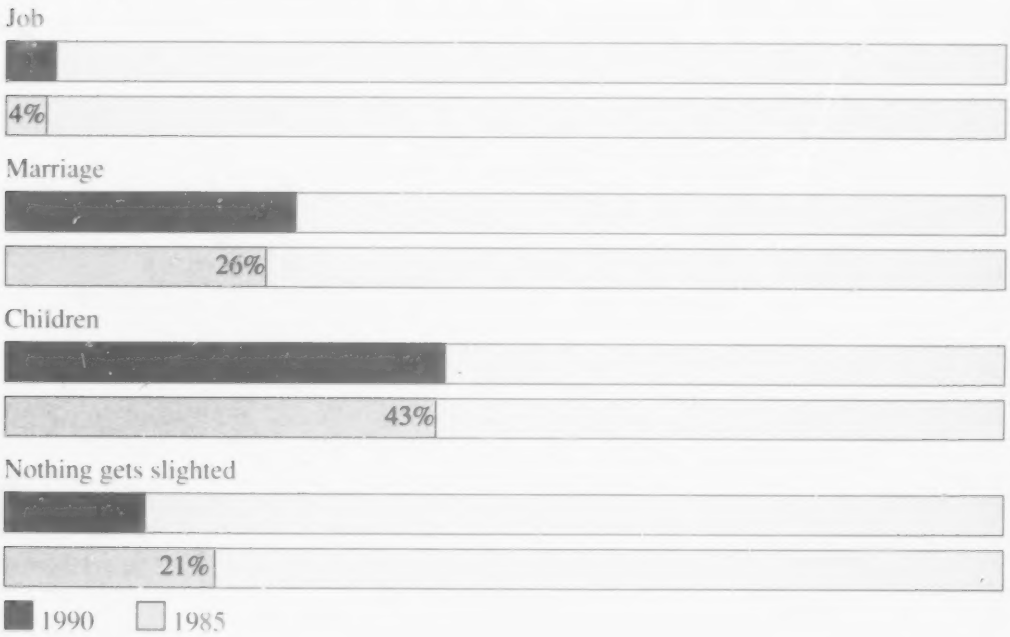
Making it All Work: What Gets Slighted?

Majorities of both women and men agree that a working wife and mother must make compromises. And both women and men feel that it is the children who lose the most when a working woman is a wife and mother. More women (44%) than men (38%) hold this view. Identical numbers of men and women (29%) say the marriage gets slighted the most. Least likely to suffer, according to both sexes, is the woman's job. These numbers have remained virtually unchanged since 1985.

What *has* changed over the past five years, however, is that fewer women now believe that *nothing* gets slighted when women with families work. The number of women who say that nothing gets slighted has dropped from 21% to 14%. And the number of men who think nothing gets slighted has decreased as well, though by a smaller margin.

The feeling that nothing gets slighted when a mother works has changed most since 1985 among college-educated women (with 11 percentage points fewer feeling this way), employed women (down 9 points), and women with children (down 7 points). Fewer women of all ages say that nothing gets slighted when a mother works: those 18-29 (down 8 points); 30-39 (down 7 points); 40-49 (down 8 points); and 50 and over (down 6 points).

What Gets Slighted Most When Women Work?
(Women's opinions)



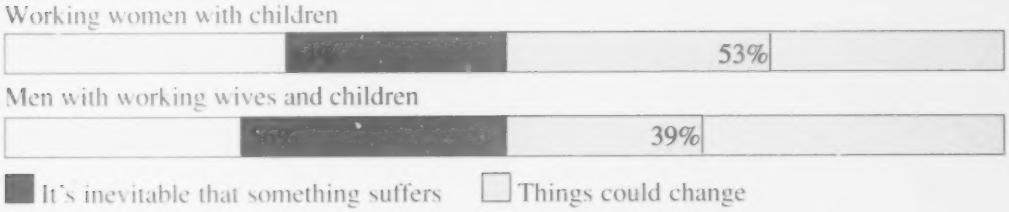
Even though many people believe children often get slighted when mothers work, most parents in families where the woman is employed think that, all things considered, their kids are "just as well off" as they would be if mom stayed home. A full 78% of working women with children say that their children are "just as well off" as if they did not work. The same number, 78%, of fathers with working wives say the same thing. This, however, could be a rationalization, as few mothers or fathers want to admit they are sacrificing their children's interests for their jobs.

What Can Change to Make It Easier?

Is it inevitable that something gets slighted when a working woman is also a wife and mother? Or are changes possible to help working women balance job, marriage, and children? Opinions are decidedly mixed. Among the total public, a slight majority thinks that it is inevitable that something must suffer. (52% of women and 53% of men).

Among the most affected group, working women with children, the majority (53%) think things could be different. In contrast, their male counterparts – fathers with working wives– think it's inevitable that something must suffer (56%). These differing assessments might help explain some of the tension and discord that has arisen between women and men.

Could Things Change or Must Something Get Slighted?



How would those who think changes are possible improve things? The most frequent suggestion is that men take more responsibility for the household and children. Roughly 7 in 10 women say that most of the solution would come from men helping more with household duties and child care. And nearly the same proportion- 64%- of men agree.

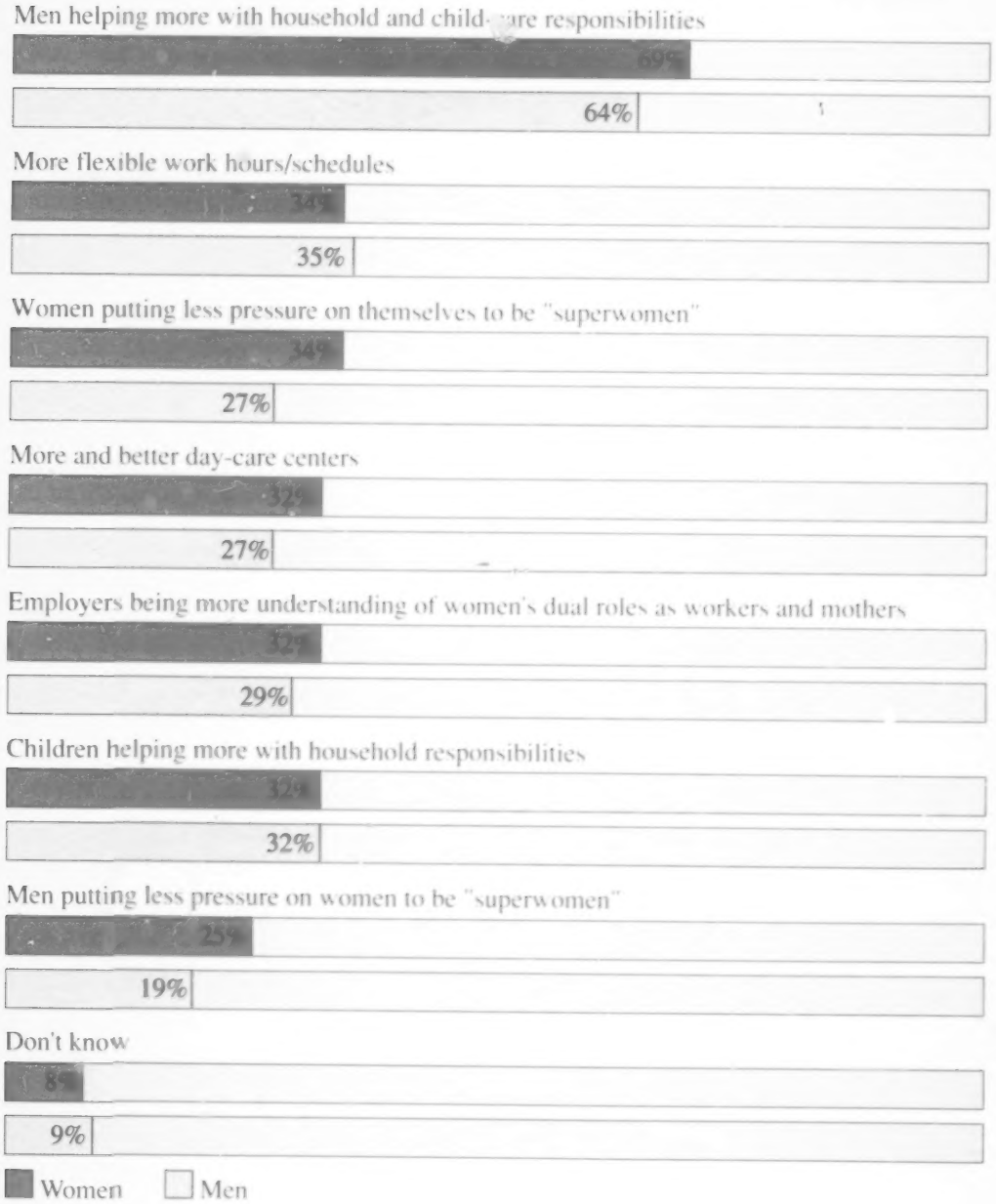
At the workplace, more flexible work hours and schedules also would make a difference, according to 34% of women and 35% of men. It also would help if employers were more understanding of women's dual roles as workers and mothers, say 32% of women and 29% of men. In addition, 32% of women and 27% of men would welcome more and better day-care centers.

More personally, some women and men say that changes in women's expectations would help, too. Thirty-four percent of women and 27% of men agree that women should put less pressure on themselves to be "superwomen." Similarly, a quarter of women and 19% of men agree that *men* also should ease the pressure on women to be "superwomen." Both of these sentiments run particularly high among executive and professional women; 45% say things would be better if women put less pressure on themselves to be superwomen. Thirty percent say things would be better if men put less pressure on women to be superwomen.

Some adults also say children could play a role in making things easier for working women: Equal numbers of men and women (32%) say that it would make a difference if kids helped out more with the household chores.

Balancing Work, Marriage, and Children

(Base: Those who think things could change to help women better balance work, marriage, and children)



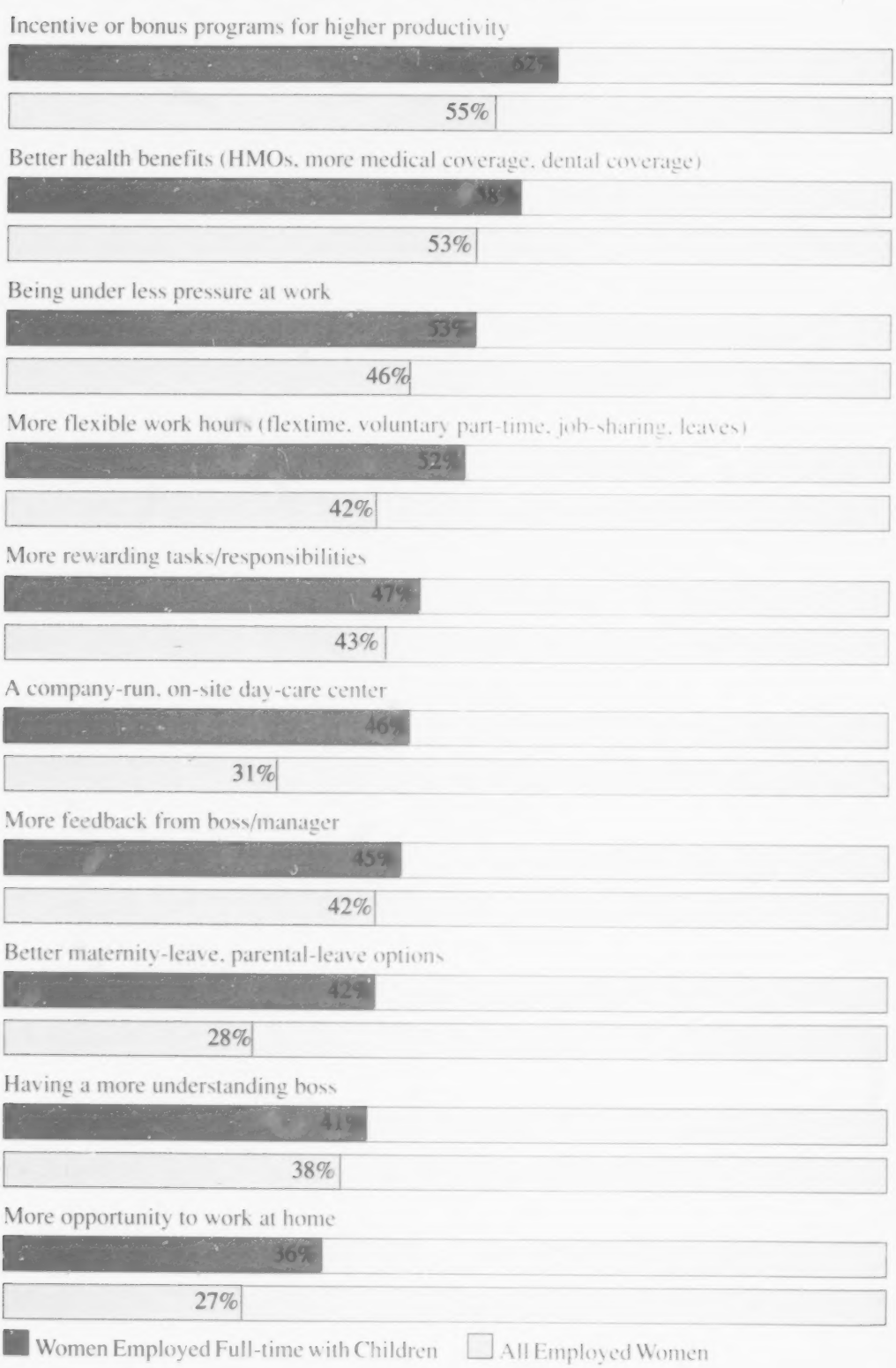
The Working Mother's Wish List

Working mothers want employee benefits and support that meets the demands of raising children. More than other working women, full-time working mothers feel that their jobs would be more satisfying if they had:

- on-site day-care centers;
- better maternity and parental leave options;
- more flexible work hours, and
- more opportunity to work at home.

Similarly, men in two-income households with children are more likely than other employed men to say that some of these benefits would make their jobs more satisfying. For instance, the opportunity to work at home would offer more job satisfaction to fathers with working wives (31%) than to other employed men (25%). Not surprisingly, better maternity and parental leave is favored more by fathers (28%) than by other men (20%). And on-site day-care would offer men with working wives and children more job satisfaction (21%) than it would others (15%).

What Would Increase Job Satisfaction for Working Women?



The Mommy Track

The Virginia Slims Opinion Poll suggests that both men and women want employers to offer more support to working parents. People seem to prefer a variety of family-oriented benefit options to personnel policies that ask women to choose between alternative career paths.

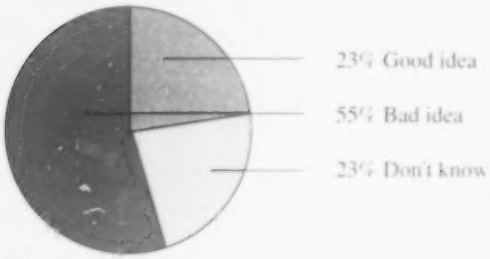
Respondents were asked about the highly publicized plan, the "Mommy track." This proposal calls for businesses to adopt a two-tiered personnel system for female employees. For a woman who chooses to be a "career-primary woman," one who does not wish to have children or who will arrange for others to care for her children, businesses would remove all obstacles to advancement. A woman who chooses the "career and family woman" option would receive less pay and fewer promotions, but would have a more flexible schedule to accommodate children and family responsibilities.

The "Mommy track" proposal has generated much media controversy. Some commentators have praised the proposal because it confronts the differences between men and women and encourages employers to deal with maternity and child-care issues by offering women choices. Others say it is damaging to women's advancement and see it as an excuse for locking women with family responsibilities into dead-end, lower paying jobs. Still others have questioned the premise on which the proposal is based: namely, that it costs companies more to employ women than men because women have greater turnover, and because women's careers are often interrupted or ended when they have children.

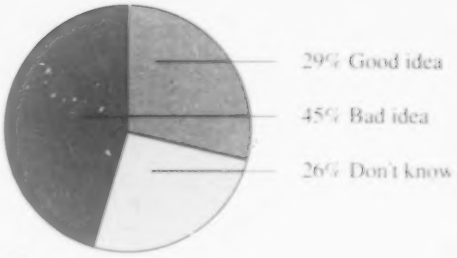
The Poll finds very little support for the "Mommy track" proposal. By a 55% to 23% margin women say that this type of two-tier system is a bad idea; men agree by a margin of 45% to 29%. Women with children, especially, are against it, as are college-educated women, executive and professional women, and women under the age of 40.

Many people were relatively ignorant of the "Mommy track" proposal (76% of women and 77% of men were unaware of the proposal before it was explained in the interview). This may help explain the high percentage of women (23%) and men (26%) who say they didn't know whether it is a good idea or not. It is also possible that the high percentages of "don't knows" may reflect uncertainty about this plan.

Favor or Oppose The Mommy Track
This type of two track system is a:



Women



Men

By an overwhelming margin, people believe that the "Mommy track" is designed mostly to benefit businesses rather than women. Fully 63% of women and 57% of men say that it benefits businesses. Only 7% of women and 10% of men see it as mostly a benefit for women.

The Mommy Track
(In percent)

Is designed:	Women	Men
Mostly to benefit businesses	63	57
Mostly to benefit women	7	10
Help both equally (volunteered)	11	14
Doesn't really help either (volunteered)	5	2
Don't know	15	17

When presented with arguments on both sides of the "Mommy track" debate, most respondents view the proposal as hindering, rather than helping, women's advancement. Seven in 10 women are concerned that the policy is discriminatory; virtually the same number (69%) see the "Mommy track" as an excuse to pay women less than men. Nearly 7 in 10 women also believe that the policy reinforces the idea that as a woman you can have a family *or* career, but not both. Eighty-three percent agree that women should not be held back just because they have children, and 8 in 10 feel that women should not have to sacrifice motherhood to career advancement.

Male respondents come down on the same side of this debate, but in some instances by a smaller margin. The biggest difference concerns the following statement: "If some women cost companies more, it is fair that they get paid less." Only 29% of women agree, compared with 41% of men.

Overall, the Poll shows very little support for the "Mommy track" idea. Most women (73%) and men (69%) say that no one should have to choose a pre-ordained career path. More than 8 in 10 believe that companies should provide flexible policies for both women and men—suggesting, perhaps, that corporations should look for other ways to accommodate and support both male and female working parents.

The Mommy Track Proposal: Women's Opinions

Women Saying They Strongly/Generally Agree:

Women should not be held back just because they have children

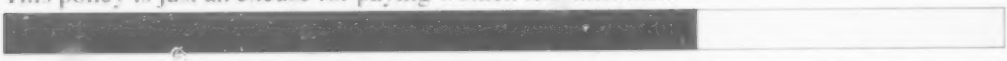
Companies should provide flexible policies for both women and men

Women should not have to pay the price of not having children just to get a promotion

No one should have to choose a set career path

This policy discriminates against women

This policy is just an excuse for paying women less than men



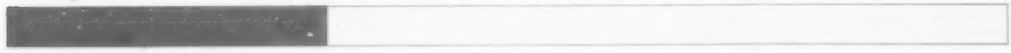
This policy reinforces the idea that as a woman you can have either a family or a career, but not both

This policy is not fair to men – they should have the same options

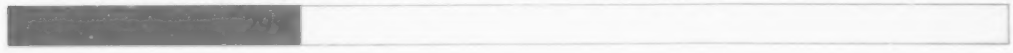
This policy is a good idea because it gives women a choice

Companies shouldn't invest as much in employees who aren't as profitable

Managers should be able to establish any personnel policies they want to



If some women cost companies more, it is fair that they get paid less

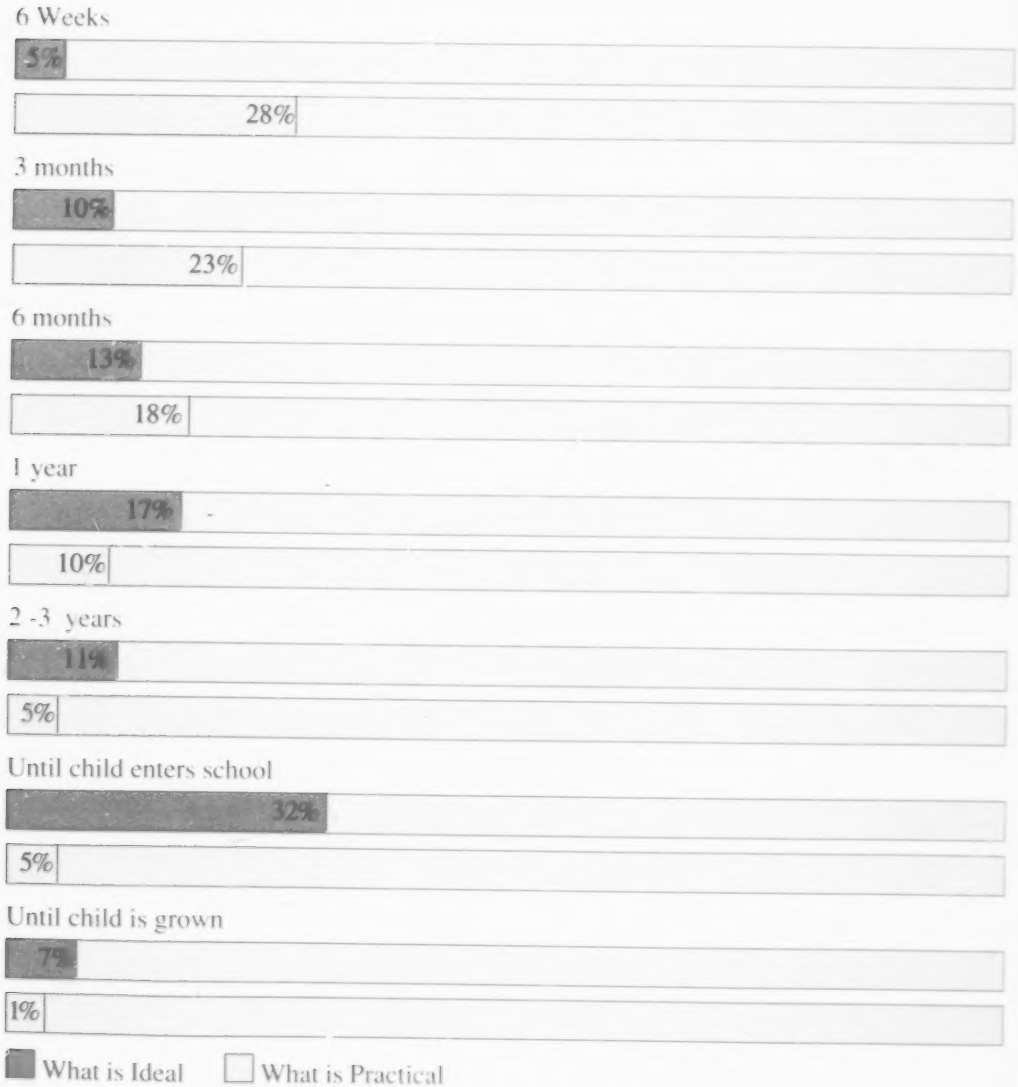


Maternity Leave: What's Ideal? What's Practical?

Women and men were asked how long a working woman should ideally stay at home with a new baby, and how long it is practical to do so in light of most employee benefits and job situations. The results reveal a mismatch between what women want from the workplace and what they get.

The greatest number of both women and men say that, ideally, it is particularly important for a woman to stay home until a child enters school. However, when asked how long it is *practical* for working mothers to stay home—considering most employee benefits and job situations—the greatest number of people say six weeks. Meanwhile, staying home six weeks with a newborn baby is seen as *ideal* by only 5% of women and 6% of men.

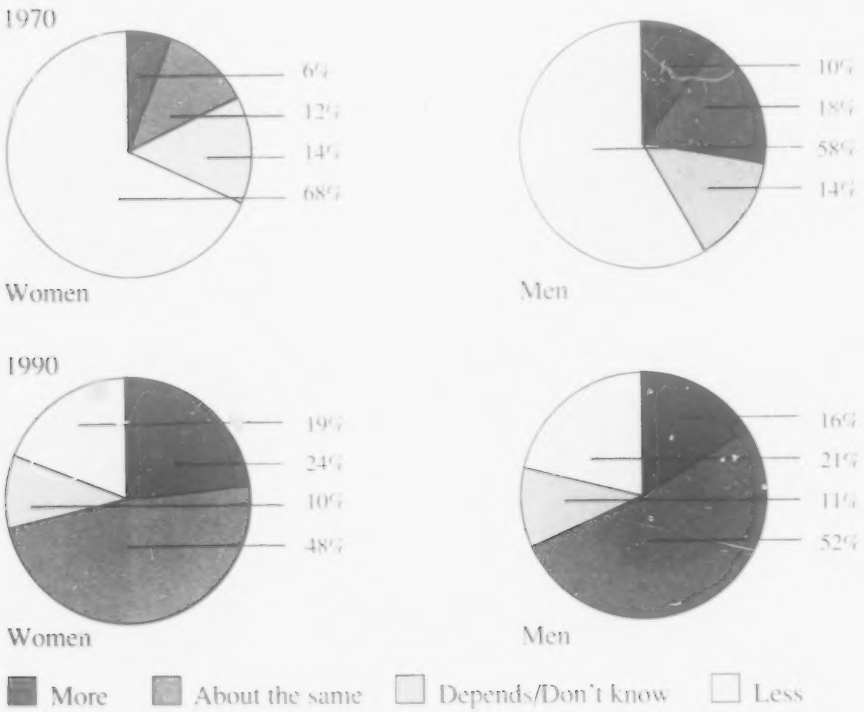
Maternity Leave: The Ideal versus the Practical
(Women's opinions)



Respect for House-Husbands

Twenty years ago, a man who stayed home to take care of the children while his wife worked could expect little understanding or respect. In 1970, two-thirds of women and 58% of men said they would respect a man less if he stayed at home. Today, half of all women (48%) and men (52%) say it makes no difference to them—it would not affect their opinion one way or another. And 1 out of 5 people (up sharply from 1970) say they would respect a man *more* if he chose to be a house-husband.

Does a Husband Who Stays Home Lose Respect?



The Dual-Career Dilemma: Who Should Relocate?

How should dual-career couples handle a job opportunity in another city? When the choice is between a wife's job and a husband's job, who should move and who should stay? Men's jobs still dominate, but the trend seems to be shifting.

In previous Virginia Slims Opinion Polls, majorities of women and men gave precedence to the husband's job, even when the wife is offered a very good opportunity in another city. This year, for the first time, fewer than half of both women (42%) and men (47%) say that wives should turn down relocation opportunities in deference to husbands. Moreover, the proportion of women who believe this has fallen 26 percentage points in the past ten years. Nearly one-quarter of women and one-fifth of men say they don't know, indicating that a lot probably depends on an individual situation.

What if the husband is offered a very good job in another city? Majorities of both women (62%) and men (55%) say that the wife should quit, relocate with the husband, and seek a new position in the new city, but fewer people think this today than in 1980 or 1985.

Relocating for Better Jobs: Who Moves, Who Stays?
(In percent)

	1980		1985		1990	
If Wife is Offered the Job:	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Wife should turn down job and stay where they are so husband can continue with his job	68	62	55	58	42	47
Husband should quit his job, relocate with wife, and try to get another job in new place	17	18	20	22	29	28
Wife should take new job and move, husband should keep his job and stay where he is, and they should get together whenever they can	4	5	8	6	6	7
Don't know/no answer	11	15	17	14	23	19
If Husband is Offered the Job:						
Husband should turn down job and stay where they are so wife can continue with her job	10	18	10	19	13	22
Wife should quit her job, relocate with husband, and try to get another job in new place	77	68	72	62	62	55
Husband should take new job and move, wife should keep her job and stay where she is, and they should get together whenever they can	4	4	6	5	7	5
Don't know/no answer	9	11	13	13	18	19

6 Women And Leadership

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Bumping the Glass Ceiling

The tremendous strides by women in education and the work force in the past two decades have not been matched by an increased representation in business or government leadership. Despite the prominence of a few women politicians, like Elizabeth Dole in the Reagan and Bush administrations, or of powerful female executives, like Katherine Graham of the Washington Post, the top jobs remain overwhelmingly male.

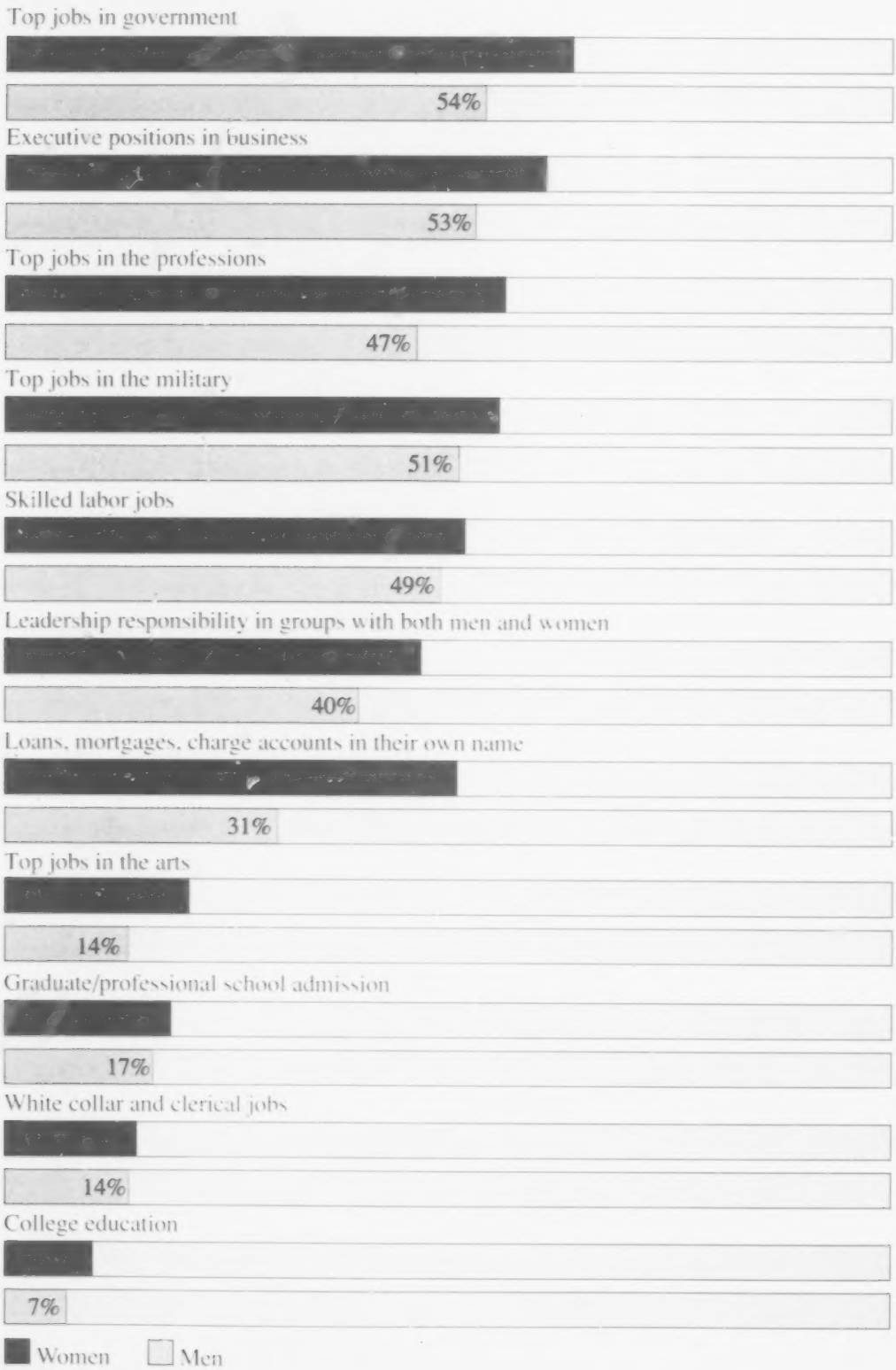
Few women, and even fewer men, believe that discrimination against women plays a role in admission to college (10% of women vs. 7% of men) or graduate professional schools (19% vs. 17%). But a majority of women believe that a "glass ceiling" deters a woman armed with these strong credentials from rising to the top—and many men agree.

More than 6 in 10 women (and a majority of men) think that women are discriminated against in obtaining executive jobs in government and in business. Majorities of women also believe discrimination is a factor keeping women out of top positions in the professions (58%) and the military services (55%), and helps account for their low numbers in skilled labor jobs (52%). And a near-majority feels that because of discrimination, women may be denied leadership responsibility in groups with members of both sexes (47%).

Only in the arts are women perceived as having access to top positions: by a 3 to 1 margin, women feel they are not discriminated against in this area.

By and large, men's opinions are similar to women's on the question of discrimination in education and the workplace, but men perceive somewhat less discrimination (from 3 to 11 percentage points) in every area of inquiry.

Making It: Is There A Glass Ceiling?
Women are discriminated against in obtaining...



Women in Politics

Women have made important strides in electoral politics in the past two decades. Women now serve, or have served, as mayor of many of the nation's largest cities. Twenty-eight women now serve in the House of Representatives, a record high number.

The picture is different at higher levels. Only three state governors and two U.S. senators today are women. Why are women so scarce in high political office? Is there a "glass-ceiling" in politics as well as business? Are women less interested than men in the competitive challenge of running for public office? Or are there other reasons why more political leaders are not women today?

By far the biggest obstacle, according to women and men alike, is the mindset of the American people. Sixty-five percent of women, and almost as many men (61%), believe that many Americans aren't ready to elect a woman to higher office. The next most important explanations are that women are held back by an "old-boy network" in party politics, and that women have few role models – other women who have achieved high political office – to inspire them.

Despite similar views on why more women aren't in high political office, men and women weigh the various factors differently. Women are significantly more likely than men to say that in politics women are mostly given the mundane chores, while men hold the real power. Women are also more likely than men to agree that "Women are discriminated against in all areas of life, and politics is no exception."

Women and men agree in equal numbers that women's responsibilities to family don't leave time for politics, and that young girls are not encouraged to aspire to careers in politics.

Why So Few Women in Politics?
(Percent saying it is a major reason)

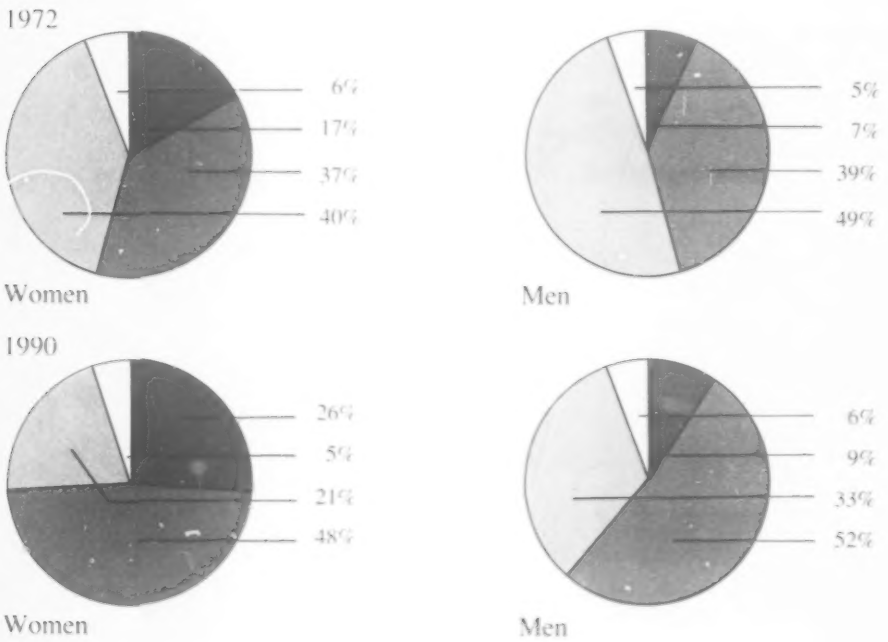
	Women	Men
Many Americans aren't ready to elect a woman to higher office.	65	61
Women who are active in party politics get held back by the "old-boy network."	46	42
There are very few women in high political office to inspire others.	46	41
Young girls are not encouraged to aspire to careers in politics.	39	38
Women are discriminated against in all areas of life, and politics is no exception.	39	31
Women are mostly given the detailed dirty-work chores in politics, while men hold the real power.	38	27
Since fewer women hold leadership positions in business, the professions and the military, few women have the experience required for higher office.	37	37
Women just aren't as interested in going into politics as men.	25	29
Women's responsibilities to family don't leave time for politics.	23	23
Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.	22	26
Generally speaking, women aren't tough enough for politics.	15	20
Generally speaking, men are better leaders than women.	13	16

Madam President?

About half of the American public says that if two people with equal qualifications were running for president of the United States and one were a woman, it would not affect their vote. Of the remainder, however, three times as many women as men would be more likely to vote for the woman candidate (26% versus 9%), while 33% of men—versus 20% of women—would be *less* likely to vote for her.

Confidence in a possible female presidential candidate has risen dramatically since the early 1970s. *Twice* the proportion of women then as now (40% in 1972 versus 21% today) – and half of all men, compared with a third now – said they would be less likely to vote for the woman candidate. The share who say the woman would have an equal or better chance to win their vote has risen from 54% to 74% among women, and from 46% to 61% among men.

Presidential Politics: The Gender Factor



For "Kinder, Gentler" Politics: Elect a Woman

A strong majority of Americans feel that women officeholders would be just as capable as men in handling affairs of state—from solving the drug crisis to improving American competitiveness. This is an indication of growing confidence across gender lines in women's leadership abilities.

On every issue asked about, both sexes are significantly less apt to believe now than in 1972 that women leaders would do a worse job than men. In dealing with big business, 47% of women and 52% of men in 1972 felt women would be less capable than men; today just 21% of women and 29% of men feel that way. When it comes to foreign diplomacy, 32% of women in 1972—but just half that share (16%) in 1990—said women would do a worse job than men. Men's negative rating of women's capability in diplomatic relations has dropped from 38% to 23% in the same 18-year period. Even in directing the military—the area perceived as women leaders' weakest point—fewer people now believe women would be less capable than men. Fifty-eight percent of men (down from 75% in 1972) and 42% of women (versus 69% in 1972) think that women would do a worse job than men. On a related issue—making decisions about whether or not to go to war—37% of men (but only 24% of women) believe women leaders would not do as good a job as men.

President Bush's commitment notwithstanding, a "kinder, gentler" approach to politics is one the American public identifies more with female politicians. Americans think that women in public office would do a *better* job than men in a variety of areas associated with social needs and human services. A majority of the public believes that women officials could better deal with children and family problems (65% of women and 60% of men agree) and providing day care and other support for working parents (61% and 56%). Education, poverty, health, homelessness, the welfare of senior citizens, and encouraging the arts are other areas in which women politicians are considered better qualified than their male counterparts.

A confidence gap in men's view of women politicians is evident in areas other than the "soft" family and social service arena. On "harder" issues, such as prison reform, dealing with big business, and negotiating with overseas trading partners, between 25% and 30% of men feel that a male politician would be better than a female. Women offer a dissenting view: In none of these areas do more than 1 woman in 5 believe that women leaders would do a worse job than men.

Closing the Confidence Gap
(How good a job women would do in public office compared with men, in percent)

	Women				Men
	Better job	Just as good a job	Worse job	Point change for better/just as good between 1972-1990	Point change for better/just as good between 1972-1990
Dealing with children and family problems	65	29	3	0	+3
Providing support for working parents (such as day care)	61	34	3	*	*
Assisting the poor	49	45	4	+7	+7
Improving our educational system	48	46	3	+7	+10
Dealing with the concerns of senior citizens (e.g. Social Security, Medicare, housing, etc.)	45	49	4	*	*
Dealing with health problems	44	50	3	+4	+6
Dealing with the problem of homelessness	44	49	4	*	*
Encouraging the arts	40	52	3	+5	+6
Protecting the interests of the consumer	38	55	4	+11	+10
Maintaining honesty and integrity in government	38	54	5	+11	+12
Working for peace in the world	38	53	5	+8	+8
Improving justice for minority groups	30	60	6	+18	+19

(Continued)

Closing the Confidence Gap, continued
(How good a job women would do in public office compared to men, in percent)

	Women				Men
	Better job	Just as good a job	Worse job	Point change for better/just as good between 1972-1990	Point change for better/just as good between 1972-1990
Protecting the environment	30	59	7	+15	+17
Balancing the federal budget	24	60	11	+22	+22
Solving the urban crisis	22	61	10	+22	+19
Strengthening the economy	21	65	9	+20	+20
Solving the drug crisis	20	66	9	*	*
Improving the prison system	18	53	21	+15	+12
Making decisions on whether or not to go to war	18	50	24	+10	+8
Conducting diplomatic relations with other countries	14	62	17	+18	+17
Improving American competitiveness in world markets	11	69	14	*	*
Negotiating with our trading partners, such as Western Europe, Canada and Japan	10	68	15	*	*
Dealing with big business	8	66	21	+31	+26
Directing the military	6	43	42	+26	+18

* Not asked in 1972

Women and the Death Penalty

A two-thirds majority of women favor capital punishment today—far more than the 46% who did so in 1970. Among men, support for capital punishment is also higher today: three-quarters favor it, compared with 56% 20 years ago.

In 1970, opposition to the death penalty was strongest among women under 30, urban women, and blacks. Today, the only group that differs significantly from women as a whole in opposing capital punishment is black women, with 43% in favor and 42% opposed.

Women in Corporate America

Women have entered the ranks of business in unprecedented numbers since 1970, but have not moved *up* to the top strata of corporate America in similar proportions. Of the Fortune 500 companies, only two have a female CEO. In the public's view, what accounts for the relative absence of women at high levels of American business?

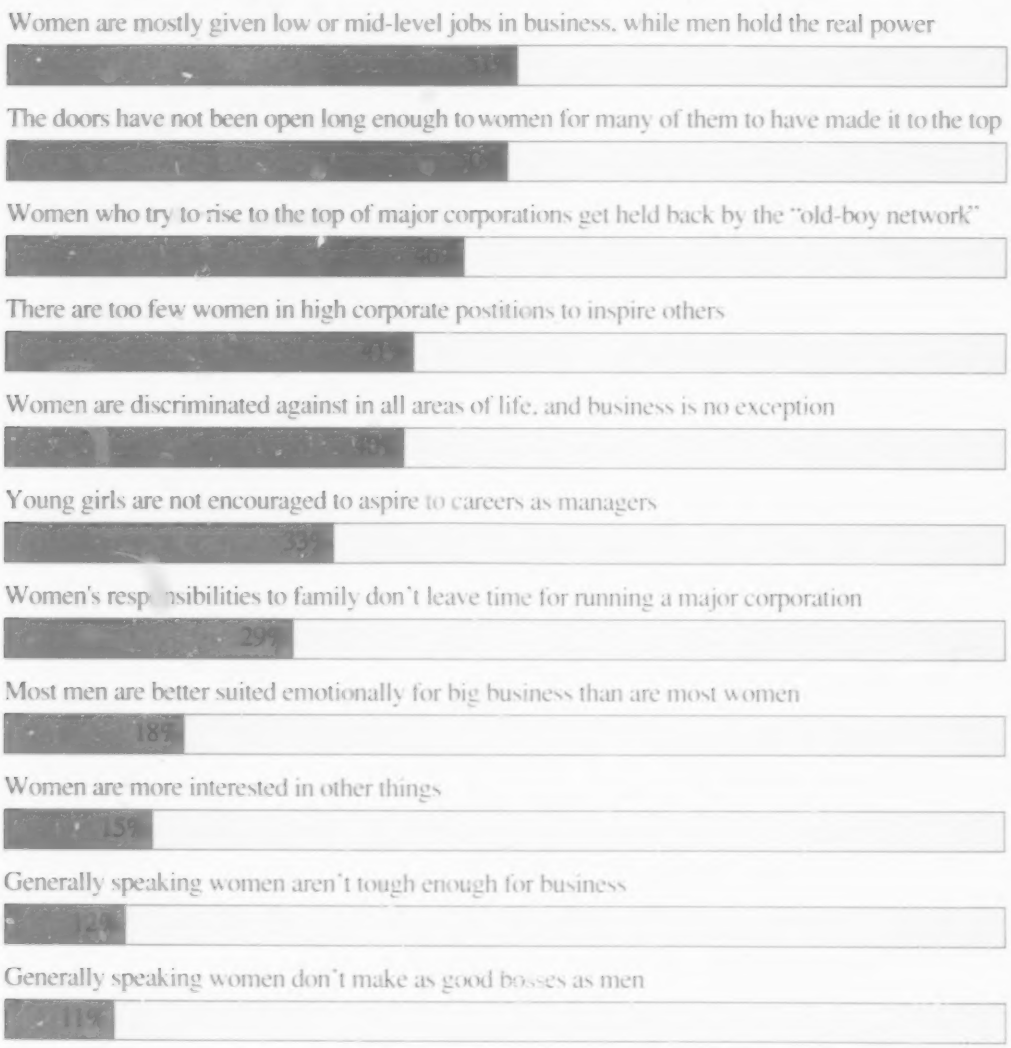
One major reason, according to both men and women, is that "The doors have not been open long enough to women for many of them to have made it to the top." Fully half of women and 46% of men agree with this evaluation. Indeed, the average age of senior business executives is about 51. And women who were 25 in 1975, when significant numbers of women began to get MBAs, are just turning 40 today.

To the extent that this explains why there are so few women in high corporate positions, it is good news for American women in business—because it is a factor that will mitigate with time as more women gain experience and seniority in companies across the nation.

But women believe that lack of seniority is not all that keeps them from the top. They are more likely than men (by a 51% to 39% margin) to believe, for example, that "Women are mostly given the low or mid-level jobs in business, while men hold the real power." They agree in greater numbers that "Women who try to rise to the top of major corporations get held back by the 'old-boy' network." Forty percent of women (and 31% of men) say the fact that "Women are discriminated against in all areas of life, and business is no exception" is a major obstacle to their advancement in business. And 4 in 10 women believe that the lack of female role models is a major factor discouraging women's rise to positions of business leadership.

Men's opinions about the obstacles to women's advancement in business are generally similar to those of women. Men are, however, somewhat more likely to attribute the relative absence of women among business leaders to lack of interest or temperamental unsuitability. Twenty-seven percent of men (versus 18% of women) agree that men are better suited emotionally for big business than women; 21% (compared with 15% of women) say that women are more interested in other things.

Corporate Leadership: What's Holding Women Back?
(Major reasons, according to women)


Women are mostly given low or mid-level jobs in business, while men hold the real power
The doors have not been open long enough to women for many of them to have made it to the top
Women who try to rise to the top of major corporations get held back by the "old-boy network"
There are too few women in high corporate postitions to inspire others
Women are discriminated against in all areas of life, and business is no exception
Young girls are not encouraged to aspire to careers as managers
Women's responsibilities to family don't leave time for running a major corporation
29%
Most men are better suited emotionally for big business than are most women
18%
Women are more interested in other things
15%
Generally speaking women aren't tough enough for business
12%
Generally speaking women don't make as good bosses as men
11%

Management Styles

Intelligent . . . able to delegate responsibility . . . loyal to employees.... Do these traits bring to mind a male or female boss? The answer is *both*. On 11 of 14 dimensions asked about, a majority of Americans say they do not associate these characteristics more with one sex than the other. Intelligence is the trait *most* apt to be seen as equally distributed between male and female bosses.

Qualities such as sensitivity to employees' personal problems, concern for workers' rights, and honesty tend to be identified with female managers by both women and men. Other traits, including effectiveness in dealing with labor unions and competitors, and "toughness" in general, are associated more often with male bosses. Apparently, gender stereotypes persist of women as caring and empathetic, and men as aggressive and hard-driving.

Women and men have different perceptions of male and female bosses in a number of areas, from being respected by their subordinates to being able to think long-term. Men in particular are far less willing to concede that female bosses might be better than – or even as good as – men when it comes to important qualities like decisiveness, hard work, or the ability to delegate responsibility. Of those who say that "hard-working" characterizes one sex more than the other, women are more than twice as likely as men to think it applies to a female rather than a male boss.

Management Styles: Mostly Neither "Female" Nor "Male"
(In percent)

	Women Say Characteristic Associated With			Men Say Characteristic Associated With		
	Female boss	Male boss	Neither	Female boss	Male boss	Neither
Intelligence	18	7	72	11	14	73
Able to delegate responsibility	15	20	63	7	32	58
Loyal to their employees	29	9	60	22	17	59
Take a long-term view of things	19	18	59	12	27	58
Respected by the people who report to them	12	26	59	8	34	55
Hard worker	22	18	58	10	33	54
Decisive	14	25	58	7	38	53
Well informed on business issues	9	30	57	6	36	54
Honesty	35	7	56	26	9	62
Effective in dealing with competitors	10	31	56	6	40	52
Concerned about workers' rights	38	9	50	31	14	52
Effective in dealing with labor unions	8	41	46	5	49	40
Sensitive to employees' personal problems	49	7	41	45	11	42
Toughness	10	47	41	6	59	33

Shaping Women's Lives: Who's Been Most Important?

Most people can look back to a special teacher, friend, relative, or mentor who played an important role in their development. Women were asked which one or two people influenced them the most, or had the biggest effect on their lives. By far the leading answer is their mothers (53%). Fathers come in a distant second (27%). Good friends also play a major role in the lives of many women. In fact, as many women name a good female friend as name their husbands (19%).

Unlike women, who are almost twice as likely to name their mothers as their fathers, men cite mothers (42%) and fathers (41%) in equal numbers. As is true for women, spouses (17%) and good friends (14%) are important to men, too.

Who Has Influenced You the Most?
(In percent)

	Women	Men
Mother	53	42
Father	27	41
A good friend who is female	19	7
Spouse	19	17
Grandmother	9	4
Sister	7	2
A good friend who is male	7	14
Religious leader	6	5
A female teacher	6	3
Aunt	4	1
Brother	3	7
Grandfather	2	5
A male teacher	2	8
An employer who is female	2	-
An employer who is male	2	5
Uncle	1	3
Other	2	2
No one (volunteered)	5	6
Don't know	2	2

Most Respected Women

From a list of 21 prominent women in various fields, women were asked to indicate those whom they most admire or respect.

When this question was asked in the Virginia Slims Opinion Polls in 1970, '72, and '74, most of the women who received top mentions had risen to prominence as the wives of famous husbands, rather than through their own accomplishments.

This year, of the four most respected women, only Barbara Bush, who tops the list, is prominent because of her husband. The other three—Oprah Winfrey, Margaret Thatcher, and Barbara Walters—all achieved recognition strictly through their own personal accomplishments.

Respect for Prominent Women
(Women, in percent)

Barbara Bush	41
Oprah Winfrey	34
Margaret Thatcher	32
Barbara Walters	29
Nancy Reagan	25
Sandra Day O'Connor	19
Jackie Kennedy Onassis	19
Coretta Scott King	16
Princess Diana	15
Diane Sawyer	13
Jane Fonda	11
Elizabeth Dole	11
Meryl Streep	9
Florence Griffith Joyner	8
Cher	8
Elizabeth Taylor	8
Barbra Streisand	7
Bette Midler	6
Chris Evert	5
Billie Jean King	4
Benazir Bhutto	4

Appendix

Sample Size

A nationwide cross section of 3,000 women and a control group of 1,000 men, 18 years and over, were interviewed for the 1990 Virginia Slims Opinion Poll.

Sampling Method

All interviews were conducted in person in the homes of respondents, and the work of all interviewers was validated by telephone.

The samples of women and men interviewed in this study are representative of adult female and male populations of the Continental United States, excluding those in institutions like Army camps, hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons.

A three-stage, stratified probability sample of interviewing locations was employed.

Stage One – After all the counties in the nation had been stratified by population size within each geographic region, 100 counties were selected at random, proportionate to population.

Stage Two – Cities and towns within the sample counties were drawn at random, proportionate to population.

Stage Three – Where block statistics within the cities and towns were available, blocks were selected at random, proportionate to population; where no statistics were available, blocks or rural route segments were drawn at random.

At the block or route level, a specified method was prescribed for proceeding from the starting household. To ensure proper representation of each group in the sample, quotas were imposed for sex and age levels of respondents, as well as for employed women. To obtain proper representation of male employment, hours for interviewing men were restricted to weekends and after 5 p.m. on weekdays.

The Questionnaire

For the most part, the questionnaires for men and for women were identical. Certain questions, pertinent only to women, were not asked of men. Certain other questions were reworded to take into account the respondent's sex.

A complete copy of the questionnaire is available by writing to:
Virginia Slims, P.O. Box 411028, Chicago, Illinois 60641

Demographic Breakdowns

For most questions, the responses of various subgroups were broken out. The major demographic variables are shown in the table that follows.

Virginia Slims has donated the questionnaire and all data to The Roper Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06268.

Demographic Breakdown of Sample - 1990

	Total women	Total men
Number of respondents	3000	1000
Total, (In percent)	100	100
Single	16	26
Married	62	62
Divorced/separated	11	9
Widowed	11	4
Black	12	11
White	82	83
18 to 29	25	27
30 to 39	22	21
40 to 49	17	23
50 and over	35	29
Under $15,000	22	16
$15,000 to 24,999	18	18
$25,000 to 34,999	16	19
$35,000 and over	28	34
Refused	16	13
Non-high school graduate	19	17
High school graduate	41	36
College	40	47
East	22	22
Midwest	26	26
South	33	33
West	19	19

Note: Responses were computerized and rounded off to the nearest whole percentage. Thus, percentages appearing here and in other tables of the survey may sometimes be slightly less or more than 100.